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Volunteer Leadership Series

Adeline Toye Cox

ENHANCING A CITIZEN'S INFLUENCE:  
COMMUNITY SERVICE IN ALAMEDA,  
1917-1981

Interviews Conducted by  
Julie Gordon Shearer  
1980-1981

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Copy No. 1



ADELINE TOYE COX  
TOKYO, 1971



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Adeline Toye Cox of Alameda has been variously described by her colleagues and friends in adult education and volunteer and community organizations as "the one everybody knows in Alameda," "the friend who rescued me," "a parliamentarian who is never wrong," "an outstanding leader in parent education," and the woman who should be "duchess of Alameda." The tendency toward hyperbole is understandable when one reckons that Mrs. Cox has contributed to her community more than half a century of leadership (or more when overlapping terms are laid end to end). For sixteen of her forty-six-year membership in the California PTA, she served on the Board of Governors; for eight years, she represented Alameda on the county council of the Travelers Aid Society. She was twelve years on the board of the American National Red Cross (Alameda Chapter), was twice president during her forty-year membership in the Camp Fire Girls (notwithstanding the fact that her three children were boys), was a founding board member of KQED, an active volunteer for the Alameda Historical Society, and president of the Chi Psi Mothers' Club. She is former president and current parliamentarian of the Adelphian Club of Alameda. For nearly all of her fifteen-year membership in the League of Women Voters she has served as officer or member of the board and is frequently a public speaker on subjects of League studies.

Not only the organizationally linked citizens of Alameda are likely to encounter Adeline Cox. Her neighbors know her as former air raid warden, block mother and senior center volunteer, public affairs discussion leader, book reviewer, and meals on wheels runner.

A second-generation Californian born in Alameda in 1895, Mrs. Cox very early acquired the habit of leadership. In secondary school, she was a leader-member of "the great unwashed," as she termed it, from the wrong side of the tracks in Alameda. Around 1910, she organized a girls' basketball team and convinced the school to supply the team with a basketball, which already was done for the boys' team. She also organized a cheerleading squad for girls as backup for school sports. A girls' rowing club was another of her efforts--this under the aegis of the Lincoln Park recreation director. There was more than a tincture of public spiritness to these efforts even then, since Mrs. Cox professed to be unathletic and uncoordinated. "It just didn't seem fair that this wasn't available to girls," she explained.

Mrs. Cox attended the University of California at Berkeley where she earned a bachelor's degree in economics and encountered Carleton Parker, Jessica Peixotto, and Dean Lucy Stebbins. Following her graduation, and recently married to William H. Cox, she followed her young husband to the Philippines where he was stationed in the Quartermaster Corps. There the

the newlyweds explored the islands, braving the fierce "noon-day sun" to see the dog market at Baguio and witness the banned flagellantes. She also began teaching at the Bentley School, which later was brought to Berkeley.

The years of Mrs. Cox's involvement in the California PTA parent education program coincided with what might be described as the pioneering phase of the organization's development. The psychological theories of child development concerning the child's position in the family, sibling rivalry, and "adolescent weaning" from the parent were startling ideas in the thirties and it was with a sense of mission that the PTA organization sponsored parent education classes to bring these ideas from the centers of higher learning to parents struggling to raise their children responsibly.

In the breadth and intensity of her involvement in civic affairs, teaching, and volunteer organizations outside the home in the twenties, thirties, and forties, Mrs. Cox also felt something of a pioneer. Mrs. Cox recalled the excitement of encountering those ideas for the first time and her determination to share them and apply the insights to issues at home. "I'm sure I bored them to death at the dinner table; they used to wish, I think, that Mother would just go take a jump, sometimes," she recalled.

Family support for these outside commitments (especially from her husband) was essential and was generously given, Mrs. Cox related. She was keenly aware, however, of the expectations for a woman who pursued interests outside the home: evenings belonged to the family; any discretionary leisure activities were expected to take place during the day--"when my mother (by babysitting) gave me a day off once a week, just like the maid." Society largely disapproved of women working outside the home. In about 1945, Mr. Cox was approached on the street by a friend he hadn't seen for some time, who reported the "ugly rumor" that he had heard that Mrs. Cox was working as a teacher.

Although the term co-parenting had not been coined when her children were small in the twenties, Mrs. Cox already had her consciousness raised to hope that the father would take equal responsibility for child-raising. Theory and practice did not always mesh. And Mrs. Cox characteristically examines the resulting strains without flinching. "A woman ought to have a place she can go and just scream," she concludes. Her solution at one point was to set aside an amount of money equal to her husband's golf green fees and then use it to take a light plane ride.

Mrs. Cox turns this acute eye and ear to her organizational experiences and identifies the particular rewards she derived from her community involvement, describes memorable colleagues in volunteer organizations, and comments on the issue of black representation in volunteer organizations.

Contradicting the observation that a prophet is ignored in his own country, Mrs. Cox enjoys wide acquaintance and admiration in her community and even at home. It was Mrs. Cox's own family who suggested the possibility of

collecting her oral history to document what her granddaughter Ruth Cox considered "an inspiring contribution to the child development-parent education movement" and "the astonishing modern awareness" her grandmother embodies. The staff of the Regional Oral History Office explored the record and found, indeed, that Mrs. Cox's activities and accomplishment in these areas and recollections of early Alameda would contribute significantly to the office's social history series.

Just four interviews over a period of four months in 1980 and 1981 produced some thirteen hours of tape-recorded recollections of Mrs. Cox's multiple careers. The sessions were conducted in Mrs. Cox's pleasant home just a few blocks from the house in which she was born. The transcript was edited by the interviewer and returned to Mrs. Cox for review and clarification. She worked diligently to verify spellings, to edit anything she suspected was redundant, and to add supporting and clarifying detail, typing the paragraphs on separate sheets. The additions proved both very interesting and substantial and so it was decided to integrate the added comments into the text with further editing rather than simply adding them as appendices. One-to three-sentence additions were usually incorporated without editorial note. Longer additions were flagged as "comments added later."

Mrs. Cox has a historian's penchant for getting the record straight. She has produced a candid commentary on Alameda as she knew it and her family's place in it, and has contributed thoughtful observations on the issues of women's development, liberation, and responsibilities.

Mrs. Cox's scrapbook of clippings proved a helpful record of her community involvement. A small representative sample was chosen to indicate the breadth of achievement maintained over three-quarters of a century of community participation. Mrs. Cox kindly supplied the photographs which were copied for inclusion in the memoir.

Julie Gordon Shearer  
Interviewer-Editor

8 April 1983  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California at Berkeley



## I FAMILY BACKGROUND

[Interview 1: October 21, 1981]##

Cox: One thing I was going to mention is that I don't know where you got the "Junior" [in William Cox, Junior].

Shearer: It's in the phone book.

Cox: Yes, well, we never use it. My husband was a Junior, but his father died some fifty years ago, and we dropped the "Junior." But you're correct; we've never in the fifty years found time to go to the phone company. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Well, I'll simply omit the "Junior" then.

Editing the Past

Cox: Then, in my own thinking, we have to come to some decision on how much I would use names. Well, perhaps just use initials because some of the things--I don't think anything that I would be saying would be negative enough that I would want to seal it, as I see is possible, but there are some things that it perhaps would be just as well to use by initials or "a friend" or some such designation.

Shearer: Yes. Well, I guess, what I would propose is that as you speak, you give the full name as you recall it, and then you will have a chance to see this all in type. Then if at that point it seems advisable, we can make a change.

##

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 211.

Cox: Another thing that I discussed with Ruth [concerning the oral history] is a problem that I have in my own mind about negative things that I may be tempted or want or do say about certain members of my family--about my brother, for instance. Also, I have a loyalty to my husband's memory and there are certain things that I was unhappy about in my relationship with him, and whether the children were aware of that or not, I don't know. But I, out of loyalty to his memory, have some reluctance to speak too frankly about that.

And then my youngest son. He was always bringing up the rear. Now, we planned to have the three children, but here I realized later on that I'd been married about fifteen years and still had a preschool child, and I was getting tired of it.

When the second child was born and they told me that he was a boy, I said I didn't care; I'd have another. But when the third one was a boy, it really came over me--I think it was the first time in my life that I came to the realization that life or fate was bigger than I was and that I was not in control of my destiny. I know that David knows that he was supposed to be the baby sister, because his two-year-old brother shook his finger at him and told him so. And then he was always bringing up the rear. [The two older] boys went to Boy Scout camp before he did and all that business.

Later on, we had a feeling that--well, he saw the other boys, you know, one after the other, go off to Boy Scout camp and all. In those days there were no Cub Scouts. You had to wait, we'll say, till you were twelve to go to Scout camp. So, in order to give him a similar experience, for two years we sent him to the YMCA camp at La Honda where they accepted boys at ten.

Well, the first year he went, I took him over to Oakland to get on the bus to go. As soon as the bus went off, I hid myself to Berkeley and I spent a whole week going over every morning [to the University and] auditing classes because by this time I really was hungry for some type of intellectual stimulus. It didn't occur to me until thinking about your questions that I wondered to what extent our sending him off to camp was to give him the camp experience, or whether he would have sensed in any way that I was sending him off to camp not only for his own good but to give me a week of freedom.

Shearer: Yes, I think that's true, but I've also discovered just in my own experience that some things that I've been reluctant to ever put voice to for a long, long time--when I've had the courage finally to say it out loud, it's just ordinary.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: I've heard other women say over and over again, "Whew, it's nice to get the children back in school!" I think it's just a very common reaction to twenty-four hours of children month after month.

Cox: But to what extent the children feel rejected when that is said, I don't know that we know. [chuckles]

Shearer: Well, I heard my mother say that when I was little. [laughter] I don't know. I suppose I took it in. I know that I recall saying to her once how lucky she was to have three children spaced over twenty years and that she would always have a child at home. I don't remember her response, but I can think of it now [laughter], what it must have been internally.

Cox: [laughter] Inside, anyway.

##

### Crossing to the Right Side of the Tracks

Cox: Yes. The reason I thought of that is that there was one experience that I had where-- See, I was brought up on the wrong side of the tracks, and that was very evident in high school in those days-- you know, the great unwashed versus the sorority and fraternity people. I was a member of the great unwashed and, of course, the great unwashed is in the majority [laughter], so if they had a leader, you know, they could do practically anything they wanted.

There was some dispute as to who was to be the valedictorian when we graduated from high school in 1913. As it turned out, I had the most solid A's; that is to say, on solid subjects. One of the boys in my class, who is still active in alumni association affairs, had the greater number of A's because he had taken mechanical drawing and some other things that were not academic subjects. The principal, of course, would have a terrible time deciding between me and someone from the right side of the tracks. Well, it finally worked out. Somebody remembered that he was president of the class and would have an opportunity to speak at the commencement exercises as president of the class, and that left me then as valedictorian, you see.

Well, with all of this, then, we all went to the University, and he and a friend from Alameda cut me dead on the campus.

Shearer: Really? What position did they hold on campus at that point?

Cox: Well, we were all freshmen, you see; there were no offices then. And the friend was just a local boy who also lived on the right side of the tracks and was a great buddy of the high school class president. I didn't ever expect to be invited out to the prom or anything by those two boys, but I didn't expect to be cut dead either. It couldn't have been any mistake because, after all, we'd been four years in high school together.

So, isn't it interesting what things you remember?

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: Of the millions of things that have happened to you, what you remember and what--

Shearer: I guess maybe it's partly the strength of your feeling at the time when something happened.

Cox: I suppose. Now, for instance, my friend Gladys--

Shearer: This is Gladys--

Cox: Mrs. McNutt, this woman who was here the other time you called.

Shearer: Oh, yes. Your next-door neighbor.

Cox: Yes. Gladys Pennock McNutt. She remembers details about our elementary school days of which I have no recollection. She said there used to be a fence around the school yard, which, of course, was right over here, you see. [gestures]

Shearer: Across the street?

Cox: No. Over on the next street where they are now building. The old school building to which we went, of course, was gone long ago. But the one to which my sons went has only just been demolished and replaced with a modern building, but not on that same site. So there is construction going on over there now.

She said there used to be a fence around [the school yard] with a gate, and that the gate was closed right on the stroke of the hour, and then if you weren't inside the yard you had to wait and get demerits. I have absolutely no recollection of that.

Shearer: Isn't that something!

Cox: She remembers outhouses, and I have no--

Shearer: On the school grounds?

Cox: Yes. I have no recollection of that.

Shearer: Where was the school located?

Cox: [laughter] Right over here! The school was on a big square block on Central between Court and Mound.

By the way, if you want to drive by the house where I was born, that's only a few blocks over too.

Shearer: Really? Yes, I'd like to. What's the address?

Cox: It's 3210 Encinal. [spells street name] That's Spanish. "Encinal," the Spanish word, having to do with oak trees.

Shearer: I have never studied Spanish, but I've spent a little time in Spain and picked up enough to get by.

Cox: Well, "encina" is one of the words for "oak." "Roble" is the other word for it.

Shearer: Yes, "roble" is the one I know.

Cox: Well, I'm mentioning that as a matter of what must have been of significance to her; it was not of significance to me. I have no recollection of that.

Shearer: Well, in fact, that leads into what I was going to ask you first, which was your earliest memories of your growing up.

Cox: Yes, that's on the list [referring to interview outline], and I had trouble with that. [chuckles] I remember the earthquake.

Shearer: Oh, you do? You were living where? On Encinal Avenue?

Cox: Yes. I lived there until I was married.

Shearer: And you were married at what age?

Cox: When I was twenty-two.

Shearer: And you were born--?

Cox: I was born in 1895 and I was married in December of--I was born in March, St. Patrick's Day. Nobody has any excuse to forget my birthday! [laughter]

Shearer: March 17.

Cox: And then I was married in December of 1917.

Shearer: But you remember the earthquake.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Okay. Let's see, 1906. So you would have been eleven years old.

Cox: So I was eleven, yes.

Parents--Olive Ellen Turner and Frederick W. Toye

Shearer: And at that time it was just you and your mother and father?

Cox: And my brother.

Shearer: Your brother Wilber?

Cox: Yes. That's spelled with an "e." I understand that the origin of it is the name "Wilberforce." There are two explanations for that. One is that there was a family named Wilberforce who were friends of my father's family. The other is because my Grandmother Toye was very religious, and there was a missionary or a Methodist bishop or somebody by the name of "Wilberforce." Anyway, that's the origin of the name and it has an "e." My brother was a Junior, Frederick Wilber Toye. [spells name] We always had trouble with that name, and I had a professor at Berkeley who tried to call me "Toyé." He just wouldn't believe that--[laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, for heaven's sake!

Cox: And I always insisted, you know, that they had put the "e" on, that I wasn't anybody's toy. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Of course! I'm going to stop just for a second. [tape off briefly]

Cox: You started here [referring to interview outline] with my family. I wondered how much farther back you wanted to go. My mother's family goes back to the Revolutionary War.

Shearer: That's what I understand.

Cox: And I have a great-grandfather [Henry Rice Mann] who crossed the plains in 1849, and The Bancroft [Library] has a copy of half of his diary\* [and letters, deeds and documents from that time].

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\*Half was lost somehow--probably in the 1850s.

Shearer: That's what I understand from Ruth Cox. She said you had a copy also of your genealogy, which I thought would be good to include somewhere. [abbreviated version appears on pages 7a and 7b]

Cox: Yes. Well, that's here.

Shearer: [Mrs. Cox shows interviewer genealogy] Oh, my word! This is extensive, isn't it!

Cox: This is the way she did it.

Shearer: I don't think I've ever seen such an arrangement.

Cox: Well, I have trouble with this. But this is my first cousin Olive [my mother's brother's daughter] [pointing to section of genealogy chart]. Then this part [pointing to another section of chart] is all equally good for me, because this is her father's ancestry and it's where my mother would tie in. Then this [pointing to another section of chart] is her mother's ancestry, which is of no value to me.

When this cousin Olive was here, some years ago now--she's dead and this was many years ago now--we discovered that between us we had original letters, you know, from way back when. So, when she returned home, she had all of hers copied or xeroxed, whatever, and sent them to me. I copied what I had, and my husband ran them off on a basement mimeograph [laughter], and we called that "Letters and documents of interest to," and Bancroft has a copy of that also.

Shearer: Oh, that's good to know.

#### Mother's Side

Cox: Then, my mother must have been one of the first white children to be born in Surprise Valley. There is a record of the first white child, and that's not my mother, but the date is about that time. At this point, her older brother [my uncle] was a couple of years old. Her mother and father and this small child and an uncle of the father, De Garmo, went into the Surprise Valley area where Fort Bidwell was an active fort. They were living there--so she, my mother, was born there in 1867. My grandmother was unattended when she was born.

Here, you see, Ruth's father, Paul, my second son, and I have done quite a little bit of research--he's the one that's been most interested or had the most time or whatever. We have tried to run

## MANN

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
- Larnard Mann (Leonard, Ichabod, Wm., Samuel, William)  
 b. March 7, 1787, Wrentham, Mass.  
 m. Jan. 1, 1813, Alstead, N.H., Patty Rice, dau. of Martin.  
 m. 2nd, Sept. 11, 1825, Middlebury, Vt., Phebe Eldred.  
 d. Nov. 17, 1848, Marshall, Mich.  
 children:-  
 1. Henry Rice b. Aug. 10, 1814, Middlebury, Vt., see below  
 2. Larnard Copeland b. June 15, 1816, Middlebury, Vt.  
     m. Sylvia---, ch. Henry, Martha, Harriet.  
     d. May, 1889, Prob. Auburn, N.Y.  
 3. Martha Birah (Beriah?) b. Apr. 21, 1820, Middlebury, Vt.  
     d. June, 1823.  
 4. Chastain, b. Oct. 11, 1822, Middlebury, Vt.  
     m. 1854, Susan O. Eldred  
     d. Feb. 19, 1873, Marshall, Mich.

7

## Henry Rice Mann.

- b. Aug. 10, 1814, Middlebury, Vt.  
 m. Feb. 26, 1839, Barry, Mich., Olive Lucinda Trowbridge.  
 d. May 20, 1852, Jackson, Calif.  
 children, all b. Albion, Mich.

1. Marian Lucinda (Minnie) b. Feb. 13, 1840.  
     m. 1860, Thomas Skidmore, New York.
2. Henry Rice b. Feb. 26, 1842  
     m. Oct. 10, 1869, Emma Goggins, Sacramento.  
     d. Nov. 9, 1915.
3. Adeline Martha, b. Jan. 23, 1845  
     m. June 18, 1864, Jackson, Calif., Clarence Helmer  
     Turner, b. Michigan, d. Berkeley 1903-1905?  
     d. Mar. 14, 1932, Alameda, Calif.

## Children:-

- a. Wm. De Garmo Turner, b. June 24, 1865, Jackson, Calif.  
     m. Jessie Skinner (parents of O.T.M.)\* 1888, d. 1915.
- b. Olive Ellen, b. Nov. 4, 1867, m. Fred W. Toye, June 6, 1894  
     (Her dau. Adeline T. Cox, now has the old diary.)  
     d. March, 1958.
- c. Henry Mann, b. Apr. 7, 1870, m. Marie Embury, d. 1957.
- d. Chester Helmer, b. May 4, 1873, m. May --, d. 1929.
- e. Jessie Gertrude, b. Jan. 4, 1876, m. Fred Hurt d. \_\_\_\_\_.  
     She is the only one of the family living, in 1963.
- f. Wallace Foote, b. Aug. 16, 1878, m. Elliot Trowbridge, d. 1922.
4. Hetty Townsend, b. Oct. 6, 1848, m. 1867, Harvey E. Babcock.  
     m. 2nd, John H. Burke, 1870, d. 1905.

\*Olive Turner MacArthur

## TROWBRIDGE

| 6                                                          | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clement Trowbridge, (James, Daniel, James, James, Thomas)  |   |   |   |   |   |
| b. June 27, 1774, Pomfret, Conn.                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| m. June 20, 1810, Sheldon, Vt., Olive Smith, dau. of Elihu |   |   |   |   |   |
| d. Dec. 22, 1853, Albion, Mich.                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| children, all b. Cambridge, Vt.                            |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Frances Honor, (Frank), b. Apr. 20, 1813                |   |   |   |   |   |
| m. 1834, Henry G. Whipple.                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Nelson Clement, b. 1815                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| m. Eveline Oliver                                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. James Smith, b. Dec. 5, 1816; m. Mary Ann Seymour.      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Olive Lucinda, b. Oct. 29, 1818                         |   |   |   |   |   |
| m. Henry Rice Mann, Feb. 26, 1839, Barry, Mich.            |   |   |   |   |   |
| m. 2nd, William L. McKim, May 17, 1853, Jackson, Calif.    |   |   |   |   |   |
| d. Nov. 20, 1857, Jackson, Calif.                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Adaline Runnels, b. Oct. 29, 1818, m. David L. Johns.   |   |   |   |   |   |

SOURCE: "Copies of Letters and Other Documents of Interest to the Descendants of Henry Rice Mann and Olive Lucinda Trowbridge Mann with explanatory notes." 1961 Compiled by Adeline Toye Cox.

Cox: down these family stories to check them with official documents, and sometimes they click and sometimes they don't. Some of the family stories are inaccurate, you see.

At any rate, for whatever reason, the young family left there and they went back to Jackson, and all the rest of the children were born in Jackson. The uncle, John De Garmo, who was a bachelor, remained in that part of the country and died there later.

Shearer: Now, this is Jackson?

Cox: Amador County. This was my mother's family. My great-grandfather, the one who wrote the diary, was the first postmaster in Jackson. He had a hotel or a saloon, whatever. [laughter]

Shearer: Is this recorded somewhere--I mean, on paper--this part of the story concerning your great-grandfather?

Cox: I forget how much is in that--

Shearer: The other record.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Well, for our sessions, I think probably it would be good to focus on what you actually remember of your parents or grandparents, if you knew them.

Cox: Well, I remember my grandmother very well because, well, I was married and then--

Shearer: This is your mother's mother?

Cox: Yes. She didn't die until the '30s. I was married and had children by the time she died. Her husband--I don't think I would remember him. He died in about 1906 or '07 or so. I remember the house in Berkeley because my grandmother took in college students. Her house was on Dwight Way, and I remember that.

Shearer: And her name was--?

Cox: Mrs. Clarence Helmer Turner. Her maiden name was Adeline Martha Mann. [spells last name]

Shearer: She married Clarence--

Cox: --Helmer Turner. [verifies spelling] His family--that is, the Turners--also came to Jackson in 1852, so that then--

Shearer: That's where they met.

Cox: Yes. They were young people in Jackson together.

Shearer: And then they came to Berkeley about--?

Cox: Well, for whatever reason, either his drinking problem--how frank should we get?--or the fact that there were very few opportunities for work for young people. My grandmother came to San Francisco in the '80s somewhere to size up the situation and left my mother in charge of the household and the younger children. My mother at that time was fourteen or fifteen years old. Eventually she had trouble controlling the rest of the children, so she has told me, and so she, I guess, got word to her mother that [she should] fish or cut bait [laughter], and the family moved to San Francisco.

My mother's uncle, my grandmother's brother, was a very well-known insurance man in San Francisco. Mann and Wilson was the name of the firm. He was in the state legislature a time or two and was well to do. We were always the poor relations, and my mother was very aware of that.

I have a picture of my mother with a group which must have been-- she worked in an office in San Francisco, in the insurance company.

Shearer: In her uncle's insurance company?

Cox: Yes. He gave employment to a number of cousins and to my grandfather, his brother-in-law.

So, they lived then in San Francisco, and it was some time later that they moved to Berkeley and they bought this big house on Dwight Way; they bought it from a relative.

My aunt--that is, my mother's only sister--and [her] youngest brother both graduated from Berkeley in 1897 and 1901, I think it was. So, there's a tradition of Berkeley in the family. [chuckles]

Shearer: Isn't that something! Eighteen ninety-seven?

Cox: Yes, 1897, just twenty years ahead of me.

Shearer: This is your aunt?

Cox: Yes, my mother's only sister.

Shearer: And did your mother graduate from college too?

Cox: No. I don't know how much education she had. Now, isn't that interesting? I don't remember that we ever talked about that. Now, obviously, she went to elementary school--grammar school,

Cox: they called it--in Jackson. Whether she ever went to school in San Francisco--she must have. She was rather young to go to work. I really don't know--but she spoke and wrote very well.

Shearer: Now, she had come from Jackson?

Cox: She was the one that was born in Surprise Valley. [tape off during telephone interruption during which the interviewee agrees to allow use of her house for a League of Women Voters tea]

I move the table back so there's a good traffic flow, you see, and there aren't too many of the younger people [who] have houses this big.

Shearer: That's right. Do you often have the teas for the League at your house?

Cox: Well, this is the first time I've had the tea. I have had dinner parties and so on, money-raising, that kind of thing, potlucks and so on. But this time, all I'm doing is the house; somebody else can do the food. [laughter]

Shearer: A good way to work it! [laughter]

You were just saying that your mother left Surprise Valley to come to San Francisco, and I was asking at what age.

Cox: No, no. She went from Surprise Valley back to Jackson when she was just an infant, you see. She was the second of six [children], and the other five children (one older brother and four younger siblings)\* were all born in Jackson.

So, we're a little vague as to why the young family left Surprise Valley and the paternal uncle was a bachelor--although there's an Indian family up there by that name that there are questions about! [laughter]

Shearer: Yes. That doesn't appear on the genealogy, though. [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] Well, that appears in some of the other information.

None of us had been back in that area. None of my mother's family had been back. Some years ago, my husband and I decided to go up in that area. We began to ask for De Garmo, and we thought people were a little reluctant or, you know, you could sense

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\*William De Garmo, Mother (Olive Ellen), Henry Mann, Chester Helmer, Jessie Gertrude, and Wallace Foote Turner

Cox: something. Eventually somebody told us there was an Indian family in the area named De Garmo. Well, you have your choice. When the Indians were given citizenship or whatever it was, they frequently took names of an employer, or he may have had an illegitimate son. Now, you can take your choice. [laughter] Anyway, there's an Indian family named De Garmo, and De Garmo was my mother's grandmother's maiden name.

My cousin Olive was doing all this research business, and I've got a whole bunch of mimeographed stuff on the De Garmos, because she wrote for genealogical magazines and so on.

But, at any rate, my mother's grandmother's maiden name was Ellen De Garmo, and she couldn't read or write. When she married Turner, who later was a judge in Jackson, the story is that she told him if she was good enough to marry him when she couldn't read or write, why, she was good enough still so she never learned. [laughter]

It apparently was a problem in her later days, because she--then a widow--lived in Berkeley with her son and daughter-in-law, and then the son died, and my grandmother had the boarding house for students. Ellen De Garmo couldn't fill in her time. She couldn't read or write, and she was too old to be trusted with some of the kitchen and cooking and so on, and I've been told that it was very difficult for her because she'd been a hard worker all her life, and here she was, an appendage.

So, anyway, that's more than we need to put in, but some of the background, I think, is pioneer, and of interest.

Shearer: Yes, indeed. Now, that was something which you knew about.

Cox: That's right. I didn't know how far back you wanted to start.

Shearer: Well, I think that what you remember, either directly from having seen, or from having heard, about your parents and grandparents that doesn't appear in the genealogical charts is well to include because that's what we want to save. Otherwise, it will be lost.

Cox: Then, this is my mother's side of the family.

# Father's Side

Cox: Now, my father was born in Nova Scotia, and his father was a sea captain. Everybody in Nova Scotia, as I usually say, either built ships or sailed them. My father went to sea when he was about twelve years old as, we'll say, a cabin boy. That would have been--[he was born in 1855]--1870 or so on. He went to sea for some ten years or so. I have some of his old books, giving the name of the ship en route to here and there, as Liverpool and Australia.

Shearer: And this was Frederick Wilber Toye.

Cox: Senior. He was my father.

He came to San Francisco on one of his voyages. He had his master's papers. I have those, signed by Queen Victoria, or at least Victoria's surrogate. [laughter] Her name is on them. But he never took a ship out himself as master.

Shearer: Why is that?

Cox: Well, I don't know. Whether he didn't have the opportunity, or whether at that point is when he left the sea, I don't know, because, you see, when you are young you don't ask these [questions] or care or whatever; and then later when you would care, it's too late to find out.

We don't know, for instance, whether he left the ship legitimately or whether he jumped ship in San Francisco. My brother says that he understood that my father never got over being seasick. My father was not a big man; he was about 5'6" or so. Of course, he used to talk big about violence on the ships and how you lay men down with a belaying pin and all that business, and I sort of got the idea that maybe he wasn't big enough physically to handle a lot of the rough crew that they had. But my brother, who's now dead, said that he understood our father never got over being seasick.

At any rate, my father left the ship in San Francisco. He worked for a while in the wheat fields in San Benito County. He drove a team of horses in Humboldt County. (He joined the Knights of Pythias Lodge in Eureka in 1884.) He finally landed in this area and he, as I understand it, worked for a carriage-painting firm, and the paint bothered him. He always had a bronchial weakness. Then he went to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad, at first as a brakeman and then as a conductor.

Shearer: Do you remember how old he was when he left his ship?

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Cox: By 1885 he was working for the railroad, so he must have left the ship by the early 1880s.

He had built this house in Alameda in 1890. He brought his mother and father out from Nova Scotia. Two of his younger brothers also had come West. For whatever reasons, it didn't work with the elderly couple here, and they went back to Nova Scotia.

Shearer: Was this after he married or before?

Cox: Before.

Shearer: Before he married? He brought his parents?

Cox: Yes. For whatever reason--and I could go into details there [chuckles]--the older couple, his mother and father, returned to Nova Scotia, where the father died rather soon after that, and the mother lived down into my days, although I never saw her. Then here was my father with the house, and his parents gone. And maybe he was looking for a housekeeper. Who knows? [chuckles]

My mother at this time was working for the firm in San Francisco. Another employee of the firm was married and living in Alameda, about a block down from my father's house. My mother came over on weekends from time to time to spend the weekend with this family, and that's how they met.

Shearer: And this is the house on Encinal Avenue that your father built?

Cox: Yes. And they met. I have in his old wallet my mother's old commute book, punched out. [chuckles] So, that must have been how they met.

Shearer: And she commuted on the ferry?

Cox: Oh, yes. In those days it was the ferry to San Francisco and then the train up around town, you see. She was coming over to visit friends who were fellow office workers. By now she was living in Berkeley, you see. She just came to Alameda on these occasions for weekend visits.

Then my father courted her, going from Alameda to Berkeley. In those days, from about Temescal on was just wheat fields. You did all this by streetcar, you know, so if you were going to make a trip anywhere, it took you half a day. It wasn't just thirty minutes to get to Berkeley in those days.

Cox: I have a picture of the house--the wedding picture--the Berkeley house all dolled up with ribbons and bells and things for the wedding.

Then my mother and father went to Yosemite on their honeymoon, and since I was born nine months and eleven days later [laughter], I have a friend who says, "Who else do you know who was conceived in Yosemite?"

Shearer: [laughter] Well, Yosemite must have been primitive then, too. Did they sleep in a tent?

Cox: Well, I'm not sure about that. I think they kind of camped out. But you'd go by train, we'll say, to Merced or wherever, and then go into Yosemite by stagecoach. John McLaren, of Golden Gate Park fame, was on the same coach that they went in [on]. They never kept up the acquaintance but, at any rate, they met him there.

Somewhere, if I find it, there's a poem that somebody there wrote to the young couple, so that gives me--I think they were camping out.

Shearer: Was that considered very unusual in those days?

Cox: Oh, I guess it was. This was 1894.

Shearer: Good heavens! What did their parents think of going off into the wilds for a honeymoon?

Cox: I don't know. I know what my parents thought of me going to Manila. [laughter] They thought that was the end of the world!

Shearer: [laughter] I should think!

### My Brother Wilber

Shearer: Now, how old is your brother?

Cox: That was the problem. He's five years younger.

Shearer: Five years younger, of course. You say, "That was the problem." What was the problem?





1.



2.



3.



4.

## PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. The Turner Family home at 2239 Dwight Way in Berkeley, where Adeline's mother was married.
2. Portrait of four generations at the Turner home: grandfather, Clarence Turner; great-grandmother, Ellen de Garmo; and mother Olive Ellen Turner Toye holding baby Margaret Adeline Toye.
3. Toye Family home at 3210 Encinal in Alameda, where Adeline was born. House was commissioned by Frederick W. Toye and built by Charles and George McRae in 1890.
4. The High Street Train Station (across the street from the house at 3210 Encinal). Left to right: Father, Adeline, Mother, and Wilber. About 1905.

Cox: Well, when we were children, the age span made too big a difference. We were not congenial at all, didn't have the same friends, whatever. We were not in high school, for instance, at the same time because he was five years younger. His birthday is in April, for instance, so it was really just five years. Then by the time I was married and living around here, not in this house, but four blocks down, and all of our friends were--at that point, the five years wouldn't have made much difference, you see, when we were adults. But he by now was a professional musician, so his work was nights. In those days, the theaters all had live orchestras, you see. So, we still didn't have anything in common really, including hours that were compatible, so that really it was only through my parents and holiday dinners and that sort of thing, and he and I were never very close. [tape off briefly]

My mother was very musical, although she was untrained. For instance, a piano was one of the wedding presents which was given to them.

Shearer: To your brother and his wife?

Cox: No, to my mother and father, a wedding present, as a symbol of her musical ability, although she was not trained. It was always a pleasure to her brothers and sisters; when we had family gatherings, she was always asked to play.

Well, I had none of that musical talent, nor did my father. My father used to say he couldn't tell the difference between "God Save the Queen" and "America." Of course, I had to have music lessons. I drove my mother wild because my hands didn't coordinate. I wouldn't know the difference when they were not going in unison. Well, my brother was very musical, and he was a professional flutist. [pauses] How did we get onto this? [laughter] I've lost my train of thought.

Shearer: Well, you were saying that as children, you were not very close, partly as a result of the age difference and so forth, and that your interests and abilities were different.

Cox: Well, I've lost my train of thought.

At any rate, one of the memories I have about my brother in the early days, since he was younger than I--he used to run away. I would come home from school, planning something for the rest of the afternoon--and in those days the houses all had fences, you know, protecting them from the street--and my mother would be standing at the gate, and I knew what that meant: my brother had run away again. [laughter] I could dismiss my plans for the afternoon and go hunt up my brother.

Shearer: Oh, dear! How old were you then?

Cox: Well, I must have been ten or twelve. That would have made him five or seven, you see.

Shearer: Yes. So, he was not yet in school then? He was just around--?

Cox: We didn't have kindergartens in those days. He was just a small child.

Shearer: Where would he run off?

Cox: Oh, down to the beach. We were only a couple of blocks, three or four blocks, from the water. Around there.

Shearer: Was that a cause for alarm for your mother? She was afraid he might go into the water?

Cox: Well, I suppose. But anyway, you don't want a five-, six-, seven-year-old wandering away! Whether there was any--when he was that young--you know, there's supposed to be a reason for runaways, but all those theories hadn't been invented in those days. [chuckles]

Shearer: Yes. But it was considered your responsibility to--

Cox: To go hunt for him, yes. So, I resented him then. Later, in regard to discipline and all, I was supposed to wash the dishes and he was supposed to dry them after dinner. We would sit around the table, all having a friendly, pleasant dinner, and then it would be time to do the dishes, and all of a sudden he would discover he had an engagement somewhere. He was allowed to, as I saw it, get away with it. [chuckles] So, we didn't have a cordial relationship back when the five years made the difference.

Then when he was--I'm back on the track. [chuckles] He was a very good flutist. He graduated from high school, but he didn't go to college, though he certainly was college material if he had wanted to go. But by this time, he was earning money in orchestras and so on, and it's possible that financial success came to him too early and that he wasn't able to handle it all. So, he didn't ever go to college and didn't have any further education.

Then, when years later--and we could check those dates too; there's a word for this, "technological unemployment" or something like that--all the theaters had sound systems and no longer employed orchestras, it was difficult for him to find work professionally. Then he didn't have any other skills, so he was reduced to doing--"reduced" maybe isn't the right word, but he was in a sense reduced to doing more menial things. To what extent that affected his personality, who's to say?

Shearer: Yes. It must be a great disappointment to a boy.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Especially having a sister to follow who has made her mark.

Cox: Yes. I have no idea about that. In later years, I was rather surprised how he seemed to rely on me. If he had official papers that he needed to do, or if he had a special letter that he wanted to write, a business letter or something, he would ask me to review it or to make suggestions. But that had never been evident in our younger years, that he had any sense of relying on my judgment. We never disagreed or had any arguments, but we were not ever close.

## II GROWING UP IN ALAMEDA

### The Drawbacks of Being Female

Shearer: Did you have the feeling when you were little that your mother and father expected either more of him or less of him than of you?

### The Beginning of Awareness

Cox: I'm not sure, really, but from the time I was little, I had a sense of inferiority for being a girl. I don't know. My ideas of physiology were very vague, I guess, in those days. I used to daydream that my family was fooling me, that I was really a boy, and that they were keeping me as a girl. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Isn't that something!

Cox: I believe that to begin with, when we were little, we took baths together, but there came a time when my mother thought that was no longer suitable. So I was really practically of an age to get married before I knew much about male physiology or accoutrements. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] For heaven's sake! So, your illusion persisted for quite a while, your hope?

Cox: Well, I suppose I got over that for a while. But, at any rate, for many, many years I had a feeling of inferiority for being a woman.

Shearer: Was that, do you think, because the opportunities for fun, for privileges, seemed so different?

Cox: Yes. My brother was allowed more leeway in going out evenings and so on. As we were older, or I was perhaps college age by now, he had fewer restrictions on him, so that there was a difference there. And then I think I married a man who compensated for a feeling of inferiority by the fact that he was a male. [laughter] That didn't help either. I've gotten over that now. I've gotten over all of that, I think!

#### How the Issue Surfaced in Marriage

Shearer: Can you explain that a little further, what you saw in your husband or felt in your husband?

Cox: Well, my husband was short; he was not much more than 5'4". All of his life, his size had been an unhappiness for him, not a worry, but he was conscious of it. He wasn't able to compete in athletics and so on. Well, I won't go into all of his family background at the moment, but I'm sure that he compensated for a feeling of inferiority by the fact that he was a male. And here was his wife, suffering from a feeling of inferiority because she was a female. [laughter] As I see it now, there were things that could be explained by that type of a relationship. According to him, all the best tailors were men, all the best chefs were men [chuckles], and there was just a feeling there.

When I would be rebellious--I was rebellious before my third child was school age, my husband had told me it was not his fault, that he was a man and I was a woman, and that he didn't have these restrictions as a male [chuckles] that I had as a mother. When the children were little, he was exceedingly good about taking care of them, changing diapers, up for the three o'clock feeding, and all that business. He was very devoted and very helpful, and I thought he was assuming his rightful share of responsibility. Later, I decided that he was just doing all that to help me, and that when other opportunities of his life away from home expanded and he became active in community and civic affairs, as president of the Kiwanis Club and all this and that, that he had previously just been helping me rather than assuming all of that as his share of responsibilities. Well, I wonder what I am bringing that up for. [chuckles]

Shearer: It's interesting that you, at that point, considered that an appropriate sphere of responsibility for a man, when this is just apparently now beginning to filter into the general consciousness.

Cox: Yes. Well, that's why some of my younger friends, such as the girl who just phoned me--I think they get a little tired (and so I've tried not to do it anymore) of my telling them how much better things are now than they used to be. Many of them are rebellious and want changes from today to tomorrow. When I say, "Well, look how much better things are now than fifty years ago," that doesn't answer their situations or problems at all, you know. [chuckles]

Well, by now my husband was playing golf, for instance.

Shearer: This was about when in your married life? After the three children were born?

Cox: Yes. We planned all three children, so we didn't have any surprises. But by now, I suppose, the youngest child was four or five years old, and I had been married by now a long time--because we were married almost four years before the first child was born. My husband always said, "Nine months and three years to the good."

#### The Fairways versus the Airways

Cox: He was obviously having more opportunities in his fraternal and civic affairs. He was playing golf. I resented very much the fact that he had greater freedom than I. So, in order to buy me off, every time he played on the municipal course he'd put aside an equivalent amount of money for me, and I used that for flying.

Shearer: Flying! You mean an airplane?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: I hope you'll go into this. [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] When he was active in the Kiwanis Club--whether he was president at this time or not, I'm not sure--these were the days when people were trying to fly nonstop here to there. There was a man in Berkeley--I think his name was Livingston Irving--who had an ambition to fly nonstop from Oakland to Rome. He had--we called it the Redwinger [chuckles]--a red single-wing plane and was taking passengers on flights in order to raise money for his project. I don't remember--I suppose I knew--what his connection was with the Alameda Kiwanis Club, but at any rate he was coming to the Oakland Airport and taking people up, and anybody that was active in the Kiwanis Club was more or less obligated to go out and take a ride to help raise the money.

Cox: So, we went out one morning, and I really can't describe the thrill I had when we were aloft. I went back in the afternoon and had another ride. [laughter] I went back two days later to have another ride, and then my money ran out! [laughter]

Shearer: What was the plane like? Was it a small--?

Cox: It was single-engine. I don't know what kind of a plane it was by name or anything, but it was just a little plane. He was just taking people up for half-hour sightseeing trips around the Bay Area in order to raise money for his project.

Shearer: And this was you and the pilot?

Cox: Yes, I guess. I don't remember whether there were more. I don't remember that. It wouldn't have been more than three or four people, if any.

Shearer: How did it look from where you were? What did you feel?

Cox: Well, to soar, to be aloft! I just got almost like a balloon feeling! [laughter] And then to see all this down there below and perhaps recognize your house. This is a very attractive area from the air, as you know, and it just gave me a tremendous thrill! I came home and got lunch and could think of nothing else. I went back and had another ride. [chuckles] So then, when my husband put the money aside, you see, for me to fly, I flew once to Reno.

Shearer: This was just flying for pleasure, or did you learn to fly?

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: You didn't take lessons?

Cox: I was flying as a passenger. By now, some Alameda friends had moved to Reno, and I went up to spend a weekend with them, and it was one of the first flights that used the new airport. In fact, there was a lot of confusion about it [over] whether or not the airport in Reno was going to be open and so on, and the flight was off and on. Finally, it was on, and I flew to Reno on the golf money. [chuckles] Then, another time, I flew to Los Angeles to visit an old school friend, who by then was living in Los Angeles, on golf money.

Shearer: Did your husband enjoy flying anywhere near--?

Cox: Yes. He went to a Kiwanis convention in, we'll say, Portland or Seattle and flew home when it was--oh, really, I think it was an open cockpit. It was really thrilling!

- Cox: Then flying was all exciting in those days, and the Kiwanis Club-- it was customary for clubs to make interclub visits, and so the Alameda club was going to fly to Reno for an interclub visit. For some reason--I guess they started and hit winds or a storm or something and couldn't get up over the mountains and had to come back. Then when they did, a week or ten days or however long later, plan the trip, it was so close to the time of the birth of our third child that my husband decided not to go. [laughter]
- Shearer: Were you flying right up until the birth of your third child?
- Cox: No, no. The experiences I had would have been four or five years later.
- Shearer: And that would have been about what time?
- Cox: Well, this that I speak of, when they tried to get there and couldn't, and then my husband didn't go the second time, was 1928. David was born in 1928. Then it would have been three or four or five years later that I got the bug. [chuckles]
- Shearer: And David was the youngest child?
- Cox: Yes. There are all three of them up there. [referring to picture of the Cox children]

Well, I have all of those out, as it happens, because the Alameda Historical Society is making some study of the Victorians, and they have a man in town who is very good about making slides for them, and they're making a slide show. I've been looking through old photographs to see what might be of interest to them. So, I have all those pictures out, and then [there was] the possibility that we would want to look through them. I haven't put them away yet, so they're all there if we want to look at them.

- Shearer: Oh, good. That's good to know.

### The 1906 Earthquake

- Shearer: I'd like to go back and pick up on what you remembered as one of your most vivid early memories, which was of the earthquake. Now, you were eleven.
- Cox: Yes. In my mother and father's bedroom, they had some very heavy pictures that were really not appropriate for a bedroom. Two of them were pictures of sailing ships, and they were oil paintings with heavy gold frames, and I remember them swinging from the wall.

Cox: Then there was the story about my cousin; this would be my father's niece. My father and his three brothers all left Nova Scotia, but his two sisters remained in Nova Scotia and married; their families were there, and their offsprings are still there. But a niece, who was a little older than I, was here on a visit and was spending her time with us in Alameda and visiting my father's brother, her uncle, in San Francisco. She happened to be in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake.

For some reason, on the evening of the fifth, she rather impulsively made up her mind to come back to Alameda, though there had not been a previous arrangement. So, she did come back on the night of the fifth, and the bed that she would have been sleeping in San Francisco was covered with bricks the next morning. [laughter]

Shearer: Oh! Isn't that something!

Cox: One of the favorite family stories. [laughter]

Shearer: Well, you remember the heavy pictures in your parents' bedroom.

Cox: They were swaying, yes.

Shearer: So, you were in the bedroom when it struck, or where were you?

Cox: Yes, I assume. See, it was only a two-bedroom house, and I assume maybe at this point I was sleeping [in my parents' room]. Since my cousin had come back, it's possible that she had my room. I'm not sure of that.

I also remember standing at my--I saw this in the paper the other night; it reminds me of it. I remember standing [at] the back window of the bedroom, of my parents' room, and seeing Halley's Comet.

Shearer: For heaven's sake!

Cox: I think I saw this in the paper the other day; it was 1910, and it's due back in another seventy-six years, so maybe I'll see it again! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Yes!

Do you remember, were you awakened by the shaking?

Cox: Well, I suppose that we must have been, because it was very early in the morning; we wouldn't have been awake.

Cox: My cousin Mildred was thrilled because she had always been hoping she would feel an earthquake, and she thought it was just a run-of-the-mill earthquake. She didn't realize that it was anything special, you see. She was just kind of lying there enjoying it. [laughter]

Shearer: And did you know differently at that time?

Cox: Well, I suppose, yes, my family must have. I don't remember that.

And then I had an aunt, my mother's sister-in-law, who had no children and was very good to my brother and me, always taking us on excursions. She thought she'd take us to San Francisco to see the excitement. [laughter]

Shearer: This was your Aunt--?

Cox: My Aunt May, my mother's sister-in-law. This would have been that day or the next day or something; she was going to take us to San Francisco to see the fun. But it developed that all the traffic from this side of the Bay to San Francisco had been shut off. People were only allowed to escape or flee to this side, you see.

Shearer: Yes. I gather, then, that the tremors weren't nearly so violent here as they were in San Francisco. Is that true?

Cox: Well, there was comparatively little damage in Alameda. There was some damage to a tower on the city hall. The city hall goes way back to those days. And there was some damage to chimneys.

Shearer: How about your house?

Cox: No. I don't remember this, but I have read since that people were not allowed to have fires, kitchen fires, until all the chimneys had been inspected. That would have taken some time, I suppose, to go through the city and inspect all the chimneys. I don't remember that. Maybe Gladys [McNutt] would. [chuckles]

Shearer: But you don't remember feelings of overwhelming terror, or that your parents were frightened?

Cox: No, I don't remember that.

Styles of Parenting Observed and Practiced

Cox: They [my parents] were not particularly excitable people and not very demonstrative either as to display of affection. I never had any idea in the world that they didn't love me or weren't proud of me and so on, but there was very little--aside from going away or coming back, kissing goodbye or kissing to welcome again--there was very little of demonstrativeness or display of affection in my family. [chuckles] I don't feel that my life was damaged by that. As I say, I never had any doubt in the world that they were fond of me and later proud of me in the things I was doing, and I myself am not a demonstrative person now. But to what extent that is a natural tendency and to what extent it is a result of my early childhood, who's to say? But my husband and I were not demonstrative with each other, nor did we call each other nicknames or--

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Cox: I always called my husband Will, not Bill. You could tell how old a friend was because all the really old friends called him Will. I discouraged other adults calling me Mother or Grandma. I had no objection being called by these names by those to whom I was either mother or grandmother, but wanted to be called Adeline by other adults. This seemed to have something to do with identity. Whether I am ready to be called Adeline by a great granddaughter is another matter.

Between Will and me there was always the casual kiss of goodbye and hello, going to work and so on, and I think most of our demonstration of affection was sexual, and otherwise not much, no lollygagging. [laughter] Since I had decided along the way that one of my husband's problems was that he didn't do his adolescent weaning from his mother, but he did it from me [laughter], I think that affected my relationship with my three boys, that I was less demonstrative with them because I didn't want them to--. I remember having a welling feeling of emotion toward them, but as they approached twelve, fourteen years of age, I think I had a feeling that the knot should be cut loose from me [laughter], rather than later from another woman.

At that point, my husband and three boys were now all active in the Scouts, and there were in those days no den mothers, and there weren't even women on the Council. Women had no place in the Boy Scout movement, so that that part of their lives--aside from the use of the house for getting ready to go on packing trips and that sort of thing, there was no place for a woman in the Scout organization.

Cox: In fact, I had friends who used to tell me anybody could tell that I lived in a family of men. [laughter] I don't know how they could tell, but I--

Shearer: What do you think they meant?

Cox: I don't know. I hope it wasn't my language! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Maybe that you weren't shocked.

But this is very interesting to me, that you tried to practice with your own sons something that you felt was omitted or distorted in your husband's upbringing.

Cox: Whether that was right, or whether it was amateurish, or whether-- but it was a long time (the boys were grown, really) before we were comfortable kissing each other, for instance. At the present moment, there's nothing [uncomfortable] with that at all; they're very devoted to me, and we kiss each other and are affectionate, on occasion. But there was a time where I--in fact, once Paul was going somewhere with the Cal Crew, and the girlfriend went down to see him off, and my husband and I were there. Paul was kissing the girlfriend goodbye; he realized he had better kiss me too! [laughter]

So, we didn't have an easy affectional relationship through touching. This touching, feeling business that's all the thing now was not a part of me ever, and I still don't enjoy it.

Shearer: Do you think you were unique in that respect among your friends and peers?

Cox: I'm not sure about that. There certainly was no feeling of touching or holding hands with my girlfriends, for instance. There was a couple that we all thought was kind of queer, and I wonder now if they were lesbians [chuckles], but there was no such word in those days. They were two girls in Alameda who went to the University at the time I did. In those days, Hearst Hall was the old Hearst Hall. It had the gym on the second floor, and the first floor--this was facing Garber--and the lower floor was a recreation room and lockers and a kitchen where you could make tea or get your lunch or so on. We usually met there for lunch, often with a bag lunch, a sack lunch. These two girls would sit around on the benches or, you know, kind of lollygagging again, and we all thought they were really queer. [laughter] Now, whether they really were, I don't know. But when one of the girls returned to Switzerland, the girl left here in Alameda kept her clock on Swiss time.

Shearer: For heaven's sake.

Cox: See, we went to college on the streetcar, and that took a long time, and this girl would have letters from Elsa in Switzerland and would read us discreet parts of them, you know. [chuckles] But whether they were or weren't, who knows. But the rest of us were very sort of matter of fact in our relationships with each other.

### Early Friendships

Cox: This by now is a friend I haven't mentioned up to this point, Zdenka Buben. [spells name] That's Czech. She--oh, I'm rambling all over the place.

Shearer: This can all be put in order in the editing.

Cox: She was born in Paris. Her father was a furrier, and by the time they came to the West Coast, he was with H. Liebes in San Francisco. The rest of the children were born in this country, but she was born in Paris. They had been in San Francisco, and when we were sophomores--

Shearer: In high school?

Cox: Yes. Her family moved to Alameda, and she'd been enrolled in the Alameda High School. The room teacher, Miss Hewitt, introduced us and asked me to take her under my wing, to help her to find her way around, meet friends, and so on. That friendship has lasted to the present time. I'm going to see her at Thanksgiving when I go south.

Shearer: Really? Where does she live?

Cox: In Los Angeles. She didn't ever marry. She was a medical social worker in Los Angeles County, retired now, of course, and very fond of my oldest son. In fact, I always resented it that when he was little we were off to some Saturday afternoon women's party of some kind, and we came home, and she was helping to feed him and heard the click of his first tooth against his silver cup. [laughter] I thought, "Really, it should have been his mother!" [laughter]

### Mother's Methodist Influence

Shearer: How would you characterize your upbringing?

Cox: My mother was very straightlaced, and I don't mean that unkindly, but she was. But it was very nice in those days, when you knew what was right and what was wrong; you didn't have to--do you like sugar or cream? [Mrs. Cox is in kitchen fixing refreshments; part of conversation inaudible; transcript resumes when Mrs. Cox and interviewer come back within range of tape recorder]

Shearer: You were saying that your mother was strait-laced and that there was something she wouldn't have approved of. Were you referring to her views on your engagement?

Cox: Perhaps she thought I could "do better." But in later years she and Will were very devoted and she often took his side if she thought he were being "hen pecked."

I really shouldn't have used the word "straightlaced," I guess. That has a negative connotation. She was very strict; she was a very good Methodist, or would have been if she'd had opportunity to go to church; and she was very sure what was right and what was wrong.

Among the groups to which she belonged in San Francisco was a temperance society. She was completely opposed to the use of alcohol. Many years later she gave us money for our thirtieth wedding anniversary. She was quite upset when we spent the money for something we had wanted for some time--a set of glass stemware--goblets, sherbets, and wine glasses.

On the corner near us there was a hotel, with a saloon on the street level. She was very critical of a few of the neighbors who sent their children with a container to bring home beer.

Later, when my oldest son was on a Boy Scout trip to the East Coast, to a jamboree, he came home with all the souvenirs, among others were a few hotel spoons and things that he'd "lifted" along the way. When he set out this display of these trophies and souvenirs and was going to show them, the relatives came, and also my mother. He decided that Grandma wouldn't understand, and so he didn't put them out--he knew that the hotel spoons would disturb Grandma if they were in the exhibit.

That gave me quite a problem to decide who was the greater influence on him, she or myself. She, being quite strict, and he knew what her standards were, would that be a greater influence than I, who was willing to play along a little bit? You see? That's another one I never solved. [chuckles] But that is a point, whether--. Of course, my husband said, "Well, that's all right, because they put the cost of all the spoons they're going to lose on your bill anyway when they establish your rates." But, of course, a Scout was supposed to be trustworthy, honest, and a few other things.

Shearer: And this was actually on a scouting trip that he made his collection?

Cox: Yes. Every so many years they have a national jamboree, and Bill was to go on a jamboree to Washington, D.C., and there was an outbreak of infantile paralysis, I guess, something or other, that called off the jamboree. But since a good many plans had been made, quite a few of the area troops went on trips in lieu of, and that was where he--

Shearer: Was your mother living with you at that time?

Cox: No. They were living in the family home.

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### Life by Railroad Schedule

Cox: I've already commented on my father's restrictions because of his hours. This was the way life was--his work schedule was frequently a problem for us. Of course the trains (local) ran from early morning to late at night. The crews had different hours for eight days and started the cycle again. This made it difficult for my mother to follow a regular schedule away from home. My father was given a meal in a basket [by my mother] in the few minutes the train stopped at the station, and he ate it during a layover at the end of the line.

It always seemed that whenever we wanted my father to go somewhere with us he was always "on the night run."

Of course, being a railroad man's daughter, I never had the excuse that the clock was wrong. And this was long before the days of electric clocks and radios.

### Early Schooling##

Shearer: How was it for you in elementary school. You said that kindergarten didn't exist. So, you went at age, what, six?

Cox: Well, six, I suppose.

I had a teacher along about the third or fourth grade, Miss Leonard, who told me I'd have to earn my living with my head; I'd never earn it with my hands. [laughter]

Shearer: Really? On what basis did she make that judgment?

Cox: Well, I guess, because I hated painting class! [laughter] The only interest I had in it when it was time to paint was they'd let me go out and bring in the cart with the water bottles on it. [laughter] They used to save little paste bottles, and you brought those in in a cart, for the watercolors; that was my chief enthusiasm for painting. [chuckles]

Shearer: Why didn't you like it?

Cox: I still am not good with my hands. I've mentioned the piano playing and I still have trouble with the typewriter.

Shearer: How was it taught then? Were you taught--sort of a precise, realistic rendering?

Cox: Yes. Mostly it was copying stuff. Really, I don't particularly remember, except I just didn't enjoy that.

My mother insisted for years that I make something for Christmas for my two grandmothers. And we both suffered so; I don't know why she persisted! But I have upstairs one of the things I made for my Grandmother Turner, because later on she gave it back to me. It's a bureau cover. Do you know what bureau covers are? [chuckles]

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: It was three handkerchiefs with some kind of net sewed in between to connect them and then crochet thread or something run through this netting in a pattern. For years I was supposed [to produce something] and my mother had to dream up something that I could manage! My mother and my grandmother were great tatters and crocheters, and my grandmother made up her own patterns. She made a pillow cover for me that said "U.C." where she obviously made up the pattern. She made a pillow cover with an elk's head on it for my brother, who belonged to the Elks. They were very talented, and I could not.

Shearer: Was this something that was appreciated among their circles?

Cox: Oh, yes, yes. You see, my trousseau [laughter]--camisoles with crochet on, crochet all around the edges of luncheon cloths. Somebody gave my mother a silver tatting shuttle once for a gift. I have handkerchiefs still with her tatting. Among their circle of relatives and friends, that was the thing to do, and it was greatly admired, and there were lots of antimacassars. It took me a long while to know what that word was. Do you know what that word comes from?

Shearer: I don't know the origin of it, no.

Cox: Well, Macassar is an island somewhere down in the Malaysia area, and it's also an oil. So, antimacassars are the things you put on everywhere to protect from hair oil or arm oil. [laughter]  
It took me a long while to find that out.

Shearer: Well, I knew it was to prevent the oil from the hair and so forth, but I didn't realize its origin.

Cox: One of the housing projects in Alameda is Macassar Straits. It has to do with the World War II era, where we learned more about geography than we'd ever known before. [laughter]

Shearer: Did you excel in elementary school in sports, for example, or in gymnastics?

Cox: Well, there were no girls' sports--I don't even remember that there was physical education of any kind.

My mother and father, I think lived for their children. I don't know that they particularly resented the restrictions of money. Although my mother was conscious of the fact that she had relatives who were "better off" financially.

There was an old family friend of my father's, went way, way back in Alameda--the Sturtevant family. I don't know whether you've ever heard of Roger Sturtevant, the photographer.

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: Well, it's that family. Mrs. Sturtevant was very arty and dramatic and used to have elocution classes. Do you know what elocution is? [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Yes.

Cox: And it used to be in Addie Combs' basement because this girl, Addie Combs, had a big enough house with a lower floor; we used to go down [there]. Then, later on, the class was in the Odd Fellows' Hall or some rented place, and not only did we have elocution, but we had Indian clubs that we'd twirl. You know, they're about this long. [gestures] Indian clubs.

Shearer: Oh, the actual tool or something.

Cox: Yes. You twirl them this way, and you twirl them this way [gestures], and you try not to hit your own head or each other and all the rest. Then we would march and counter-march and drill and that type of thing. I enjoyed the marching in unison very much.

Shearer: As part of the elocution class, or as another activity?

Cox: Well, it sort of expanded into that. But, now, this was all extra-curricular; this was not in connection with the school. These would be private lessons.

I had a pair of Indian clubs, and my mother made a heavy, green, baize material [rough woolen material with no nap] bag with a drawstring, and that's what I carried the Indian clubs around in, you see, this bag. I'm not sure that baize is the kind of material I'm talking about. It was not canvas. It was a heavy material, but it was not stiff like canvas.

I was considered very unladylike. I don't know how this came to my mind, that we ought to have some kind of a rooting section for the boys. Of course, this was all for the boys, you see; the girls' function was only to support the boys' athletic teams.

Shearer: But nevertheless, the girls also took the Indian clubs?

Cox: No. We're on another subject now.

Shearer: Oh, you mean in school now.

Cox: We're on the subject of sports or athletics. I don't know where I got the idea that there ought to be a rooting section [laughter], and that was considered very unladylike.

Shearer: Really?

Cox: Oh, yes. Even though we were fully dressed.

Shearer: What did you do to lead the cheers?

Cox: Oh, just stand out in front and lead them. This was in elementary school.

Then, when I got to high school, the athletic department was not part of the curriculum then. The equipment for the teams and all was bought and paid for by the student body, and they didn't think it was worthwhile to buy anything for girls, so we had a big battle over that.

Shearer: Now [you said], "We had a big battle." You said earlier that you were considered a leader of the great unwashed. In what sense were you a leader? Did you have an official position?

Cox: Well, at this point, several of us decided we ought to have a girls' basketball team. I don't know where we got the idea, but anyway we did. Of course, we would wear our own bloomers and blouses and all. But what about the ball? We had a terrible time to get the student body to agree to buy a basketball for the girls. I have pictures of this too.

Shearer: Oh, wonderful!

Cox: Then there were two young women from Berkeley, and they must (as I think of it now) have been student teachers. In those days, they used to call them practice teachers. [chuckles] That didn't go over very well, so now they're called student teachers.

Shearer: Where did you actually play basketball?

Cox: Well, we played on the school premises. I suppose there was a boys' basketball team. We had a few matches. I remember we went to San Francisco once. But I was not particularly good at this either. My coordination is not too good. So, it was more women's lib, I guess, than it was a real fervor for athletics, you see. For however long this went on, I was either captain or manager of the team, one or the other, and there were a few of us that stuck with it.

Shearer: Well, if your coordination wasn't finely tuned, your sense of justice certainly was finely honed. [laughter]

Cox: Right! Yes! [laughter]

### The Facts of Life--Sexual and Social

Cox: The reason that my mother had to finally take me aside and tell me about the facts of life [chuckles] was because at this time we were living on the ranch and I was so unhappy [about] the way the roosters pestered the hens. [laughter] I talked about it and I went out in the yard and chased him [a rooster], you know. My mother had to put a stop to that and tell me what was what.

Shearer: How old were you then?

Cox: [pauses to reflect] Well, we were up there from about 1907 to 1909. I was about thirteen years old, just about ready to mature. In fact, I remember when I first menstruated. That was a period of time when we lived in the country because my father thought a chicken ranch was the way to get rich, and so for a period of time my brother and I went to a one-room school.

Shearer: Where was this?

Cox: Sonoma County. It's the Dunbar School, near Glen Ellen.

I'm still in communication with a friend I met at that time. We lived there a while, and my grandmother was there, and my uncle for a while commuted to Vallejo to teach. My father didn't ever leave town because--

Shearer: Didn't leave Alameda?

Cox: No. He was working to support the establishment [laughter] until it got going, you see.

Shearer: The chicken ranch.

Cox: My mother used to run an incubator and incubate the eggs and all.

Shearer: How many birds did you have?

Cox: Oh, I don't know. Hundreds, I guess. [laughter]

Shearer: And you did it single-handedly, just your mother and uncle and--?

Cox: My mother and my grandmother and my uncle.

I thought the other day of something there, thinking of leadership and a sense of power, which I sometimes enjoy [chuckles] and which I have to fight sometimes. I remember there was a commotion out in the barn, and everybody was concerned as to what it was. My uncle must have been away. My mother and grandmother were a little apprehensive about it, and I took over and went with them. I don't remember now what it was. It couldn't have been a fire or anything, or I would have remembered. But I remember--I was about thirteen then, you see--assuming a leadership role with them. I don't know just exactly what that meant, but going with them and perhaps being the first in, or calling out to the animals or something in order to quiet them. Maybe it was just a skunk going through. I don't know. But I have a distinct recollection of rising to a position of leadership over my mother and grandmother and assuming responsibility.

Shearer: Goodness! At that age!

Cox: Another time I remember feeling protective of my mother occurred when I was in the eighth grade at school. Occasionally Mother went to Berkeley to visit. This time I could not go with her as early as she wanted to go, as I was reading a story about Abraham Lincoln, which I had written, at an observance at school. I remember going

Cox: to Berkeley later for the purpose of escorting my mother and small brother home. (I also remember that I had written that Lincoln's mother had died from "milk leg,") and that the teachers deleted that sentence.

Where I got all my bossiness, I don't know. [laughter]  
My mother's motto was "Seek peace and pursue it."

Shearer: You were saying that you remember your first menstruation, which occurred while you were at the ranch.

Cox: Yes. I was riding on a bicycle. I guess by now I knew what was coming. I don't recall that it was a--

Shearer: You weren't shocked or surprised?

Cox: I wasn't shocked, no, as if I didn't know what was going to happen.

Then, another thing about my grandmother. One of the reasons that we had gone to that particular place was that a relative had a ranch in the neighborhood, and that's how my family had learned that this place was for rent or for lease. There was a young man in that family, a little older than I, but a very handsome young fellow who was going to Sonoma High School at the time. He had a horse and a buggy, and he was quite a dashing soul. He had a time or two wanted me to go somewhere with him, which I hadn't done very much.

I was once just lolling around on the couch in the house, and he was in the room, in the building, at our home, you know. My grandmother made a remark. I don't remember her exact words now. I had no idea what she meant. But what she was referring to, you see, was that I was not sitting up properly--an invitation. She used the word "invitation" because I was stretched out on the couch or something. [She told me] to "shape up," you know. Didn't I know that was an invitation? I had no idea in God's world what she was talking about.

Shearer: Were you impressed with this young man? Did you feel any sort of stirring of affection?

Cox: No, I don't believe so. He was older than I. While he was very dashing and good-looking, and maybe I enjoyed occasionally going out for a ride in his buggy, I was still only in the eighth grade; I hadn't graduated from grammar school yet.

Later on, it's possible. He invited me once to a fancy costume ball. Among the clothes to wear, his sisters had a kind of a Martha Washington dress, which was very becoming to me. I was

Cox: conscious of the fact that I had curly hair and was pretty and that this was a very becoming costume. But I considered I had a previous engagement and a loyalty to friends in other places, and I declined the invitation.

We had a rowing club up here at Lincoln Park. I think it was something of that nature that I had a commitment to. But I turned down this other invitation.

Shearer: At that point, when you were around thirteen and, I guess, throughout your childhood, you had friends who were boys as well as friends who were girls? You felt comfortable with both sets of friends?

Cox: Well, for the most part, my friends were girls. I didn't have any boyfriends, really, in high school.

Shearer: You mean boyfriends in the sense of social escorts?

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: Or boy friends?

Cox: One [boy] that I met at the church used to walk me home, and there was some hand-holding and all that business, and he was not as prominent in high school as I was. It came back to me that he was talking about this very modest squiring me around (because he didn't take me anywhere, you know, to a party or anything), and I quit seeing him.

Shearer: He was talking about it to enhance his own status?

Cox: Yes, yes, that he was walking home from Sunday school with me. So, when that word came back to me, I dropped him.

In those days, there was no dramatic department in the high school. For the student plays and everything, there was a traveling coach. I can think of his name if I try hard enough. He used to travel around to all the different high schools and support himself by coaching dramatic productions. I was in the senior play and so on. I met him once on the street just by coincidence, and he asked me if I had any boyfriends at high school, and I said no. He said, well, he wasn't surprised, that he thought I was more mature than most of the boys that he'd seen at high school, and maybe that I'd frightened them off.

I think, in my own mind, none of the social boys ever invited me out, and I wouldn't go with anybody else, like this one I quit seeing. I was obviously not in the elite, and then I told you, the sororities--

Shearer: The economic and social elite?

Cox: Yes. High school fraternities and sororities may still have been--they may have been illegal that long ago; I don't know. Of course, they were illegal later. But they were the dominant force in high school when I was there, and you had to be of a family of influence and money, and I was not in that class. None of those boys then would ever offer me a date, and I wouldn't go, I guess, with anybody else. I don't remember that I ever had any problems that way. [laughter] I satisfied myself in other ways. I didn't dance.

Shearer: Because of your Methodist background?

Cox: Well, yes. I used to go to--there used to be a youth organization in the church called the Epworth League. I don't know what they call it now. [spells league name] I think they still have a youth organization of some kind, but I don't think they call it that. But we used to have parties either at the church or in private homes and played games. When I would leave for such a party, my mother would remind me that I "came from a long line of ladies."

In those days, Methodists didn't dance or play cards. They've gotten over that. When I first saw the Methodist church advertising a bridge tournament, I thought the world had turned. [laughter]

Shearer: Oh, gosh! [laughter]

Well, it sounds as though you did have a sense of yourself as being a person of worth and a person of stature, whether or not you matched the social profile of the people in the elite.

Cox: Yes, yes. I always take it for granted that people will like me, and I am surprised when I hear of someone who does not; or does not approve of me.

I knew I was getting good grades. I knew that I didn't have to study too hard. [chuckles] It was when I was in college that there first began to be all this talk about IQs, and if you went-- I think it was the Stanford Binet test had been developed.

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: You were not routinely given an IQ test. For a while, I kind of revolved the idea in my mind, what would you have to do to get an IQ test? I was just curious to know why some people were so slow [laughter] to see things that seemed to me rather obvious. I was just curious to know, and I never found out. [chuckles] I know what the IQs of my children were, but I never found out where I

Cox: would grade. But I would have been interested to know. I thought, well, if I would know that somebody was of an obviously lower IQ, then perhaps I would be more forgiving of them [chuckles] if they didn't snap into it or see things as fast as I thought they ought to.

In those days, in my early PTA days, I guess I was the only PTA leader in town with a college background. By then, of course, I was a married woman and all. But that was one of the reasons that I enjoyed the California Congress [of Parents and Teachers]; most of them were university women, and that was the first time, really, I had associated with my own kind, level, or whatever you want to say. This was in the '40s.

Now that, of course, is no longer the case, because most young women nowadays and most of my League friends and all have a college background; and the people I run around with, you know, although most of them are younger than I, have educations that are equal or superior to mine. But for a long while in my younger married days that was not the case.

Shearer: Was that also the case in your girlhood? Did you find yourself being impatient with your friends--?

Cox: Well, in a way, but on the other hand--[pauses] and the name is coming to me that I tried last night to think of and couldn't. This friend Zdenka--certainly we were of an equal calibre. Maybe she's brighter; I don't know. There was no problem there.

And another girl--I don't know why I've lost track of her--Eva Steele. Her family was more influential; I mean, as far as finances were concerned. They had a bigger house down in town, and what I thought I always wanted if I ever had a house; they had a porte cochère. [laughter] To date, I have never gotten a porte cochère! [laughter] That was one of my ambitions. As I remember it, this girl's parents had out-of-town investments or property. I then sometimes would go and stay with her over a night or a weekend or something, so that we'd go home from school together, you see, so that she wouldn't be alone in this big house.

Shearer: How could you tell? I mean, if you looked at somebody on the first or second day of school, a classmate, would you be able to tell, by looking at them and listening to them talk to which group they belonged.

Cox: Well, to this day, I know you're not supposed to be able to tell by looking at people! [laughter] But I thought I could!

Shearer: Well, but by their clothes and so forth.

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: Do you feel that the way you dressed set you apart in some way from the others?

Cox: I keep saying, "In those days..." [laughter] We'll have to think of some other preface for some of my remarks!

We didn't just go into a store and buy things off the rack.

Shearer: This was in grammar school then?

Cox: Yes, or even in high school. My mother made my clothes. She was a good seamstress but plain; she wasn't fancy in the patterns she bought and the materials and all. Whether it was because of that or not, I--

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Cox: I was saying that my mother made my clothes. We did not go to stores and buy off the rack. If you wanted anything special, you had a dressmaker. There was a dressmaker in town who was a former friend of my father's from way back and made my wedding dress, for instance, and my first maternity dress.

But I was always neatly dressed. I was pretty. I didn't feel out of place in the clothes I had, and clothes have never meant a great deal to me. I didn't have as many changes of clothes; they were not as fancy as some of the other girls' in high school. Those were the days when some of the girls would come out with peekaboo blouses that [chuckles] other people didn't think were too nice. [laughter]

Shearer: That was the very gauzy material, and then it would show your camisole underneath?

Cox: Yes.

I didn't need clothes to support me, I guess. I've said two or three times, since there were so many of us, if you were a leader you had plenty of support and backers. I was, I suppose, self-conscious of the fact that--well, I say that I lived on the wrong side of the tracks. To what extent unconsciously that spurred me forward, I have no way of knowing, but consciously that did not.

Maneuvering to Get Ahead

Cox: In thinking of your coming, and talking with Gladys [Pennock] McNutt I told her the other night, I only remember one really mean thing that I ever did in high school. In those days, we had six-month terms, so that you were a high senior or a low senior and so on, and so the student body offices were six months terms. I had been other things--secretary of the student body and all. Of course, there was no idea of a girl becoming president, but I was eligible to be vice-president, and I was then a low senior.

Some of the boys, the fraternity boys, came to me and said that So-and-so, who was a high senior, wanted to run for vice-president and this was her last chance, but that if I ran against her I would win. Since I had another six months to go, would I bow out and let her run? I said no, and I beat her. [chuckles] So far as I remember, that's the only really consciously mean thing I ever did.

I did finagle myself to be something or other in the school paper. I had been one kind of editor and another. I'd have to look; I have them upstairs. I don't remember whether this was to be the editor or--anyway, I wanted a higher position on that paper, and I wangled that for myself, and after I got it I didn't enjoy it.

Shearer: How did you wangle it?

Cox: Well, I don't remember. [laughter] I'll have to think hard just how I figured that out. It was something then that hadn't come to me through evolution, that I had manipulated, and then I didn't get the pleasure out of it that I had thought. So, that, and the fact that I would not withdraw to let this other girl, whose name I've forgotten, become vice-president.

An Opportunity to Shine

Cox: Then, during that period of time, the football team, which at Alameda didn't do too well, had a big game over at Tamalpais [High School] or somewhere, and they won. So, there was going to be this great, big rally. They were going to parade up and down Park Street and then hold a big rally at school celebrating this victory. That morning when we went to school, the president of the student body said to me that I would have to preside at this rally at the school because he was on the team and he wanted to be with the team. So, with about fifteen minutes' notice, I presided and introduced team members and sponsors with an appropriate word for each.

Cox: I can make people laugh, and I don't know how it is; I have no idea how it is. But I speak well. We don't need to be modest, do we?

Shearer: Certainly not! No. Let's just be straight! [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] I speak well, and I have always preferred speaking over, say, writing. At one of the times when I was rebellious here at home, my husband said, why didn't I start to write; you know I could do that. That didn't appeal to me, although a time or two I did start out a sort of an autobiography. It didn't ever come out to much. But I enjoy speaking; I speak well; I can hold people's attention.

When I was with the PTA, for instance, I have presided over as many as five hundred or six hundred people at conferences and kept things going. Also, when I was on the State Board if there was a topic such as legislation to be presented which might be technical or dreary, and I was to present it, people would sort of settle back because they'd figure it wasn't going to be so bad after all. I don't know how I do it.

Then in my parent education days I'd come home, and my husband would say, "Well, how did it go?" I said, "Well, they laughed in the right places." I don't tell jokes, you know, like toastmaster or toastmistress business, but usually somewhere (and I don't plan it) during the course--perhaps I have a sense of humor--a twisted word either makes people laugh or relaxes them. There again, I have a sense of power; I enjoy having an audience.

Shearer: Well, you treat your audience well.

It's a very interesting process of listening and feeling and sensing where your audience is.

Cox: I pick out somebody in the audience who is responsive, and I play to that person, and then we build each other up.

Shearer: That's interesting, yes.

Cox: So, nothing is deliberate; you can't plan this ahead of time particularly. When I went around giving parent education talks and so on, obviously I had an outline, but I don't read what I'm going to say. I have enough notes to keep me on the track, and then the rest of it is just from--well, it isn't exactly ad-libbing, but anyway I enjoyed that.

Shearer: Well, that's very evident, I must say. My attention is riveted on everything you say.

Cox: [laughter] Well, it would be too bad if I convinced myself that this is all worthwhile, wouldn't it!

Shearer: It wouldn't be too bad at all. I'm thoroughly convinced.

I promise you that I will not make you talk much longer. I just want to glance at this page again and see what I have omitted. Let's see. [reviews interview outline]

### Father's Political Views

Cox: Oh, I didn't tell you that my father was a "parlor pink." My father was a Socialist, in name only. He subscribed to some magazine.

These were the days of Stitt Wilson in Berkeley, who kept running and running, and who used to say that everybody voted for him except the north side and the University side. He was always running for mayor or something in Berkeley, and he got the west Berkeley votes. But which is it--the north side?--that's the good side of Berkeley? [laughter] He never got any votes from there.

I don't remember--I'd have to check dates on this--whether Eugene Debs was around at this point.

Shearer: How old were you? Do you remember?

Cox: Yes. Well, by now I was of high school or even college age. I think I must have had a few boyfriends at this point, because I remember it didn't work well when my father was at home because he would come in and regale the boys with all the stories of sailing ships. [laughter] So, I must have had boyfriends, but not a steady until Will [William Cox] came along. He had a car, and I was the only one of my girlfriends who had a boyfriend with a car.

Shearer: So then you were not trapped in your parents' parlor; you could go out driving.

Cox: Yes. And my mother always said she didn't mind my going out with Will in the car because she knew it took two hands to drive. [laughter] Little did she know!

Shearer: [laughter] Well, would you care to explain that remark? That is only if the car is in motion.

Cox: [laughter] He always filled up the car with my girlfriends and took us to student affairs on the campus, women's activities, and then [he'd] hang around and bring us home. This would be Zdenka, and Jeannette, who's now dead. Gladys did not go to Berkeley.

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### Holidays and Family Celebrations

Shearer: One thing that I'd like to ask you about more--and I'm going to restrain myself from doing it right now--is the holidays and birthdays and your comments about the great lengths you went to to produce this handmade bureau cover for your grandmother.

Cox: Yes. Well, I can say quickly, some of the children in the neighborhood had birthday parties at their houses. I don't know how it developed, but my birthday parties were usually picnics. My mother would invite my friends and pack a picnic basket in a collapsible--

Shearer: Hamper?

Cox: No, they weren't hampers. [pauses to try to think of word] I'll think of the name. A collapsible basket; you know, a bottom and a top and then a strap called a "telescope basket."

We would get on the streetcar and go over into Leona Heights or even as far as Hayward and have an outdoor picnic birthday party. I don't remember my having birthday parties at home much. I went to birthday parties in the neighborhood for other children.

Then, for many years, since my grandmother and my Aunt Jessie were living in Berkeley, we went to my grandmother's for Thanksgiving, we came to our house in Alameda for Christmas, and we went to my Aunt Jessie's for New Year's. And these were families. By now there were younger cousins than myself, you see. My Aunt Jessie and Uncle Fred had three, and my Uncle Henry and Aunt Marie had three. They were all younger than I. That went on for a good many years, until all of the children were getting a little too old for that, at the adolescent age and no longer interested. But for, oh, I suppose, five, six, eight years, we always--it was understood that these family dinners would be one place for Thanksgiving, one place for Christmas, and then another place for New Year's.

Shearer: I see. It sounds like you kept strong connections among you.

### How Mother Interpreted Methodist Practice

Cox: My mother was a great one for family connections. She enjoyed writing letters. She kept up with everybody, with her letters. I said that she was a little strict about Sundays. She wouldn't allow herself to tat on Sundays, but she would allow herself to write letters. I don't know that I ever threw it up to her, but I thought that since she got equal pleasure out of both [laughter], I didn't quite know how she figured which was and which wasn't correct to do on Sundays.

Shearer: You attended the Methodist church?

Cox: By the time I was five, you see, and we'll say old enough to go to Sunday school, my mother had a baby. There were neighborhood girls who were older than I. I don't know that this began when I was five, but by the time I was seven or eight or so, my mother still would have been handicapped with a toddler. These older girls in the neighborhood took me to Sunday school at the Christian church.

Then, I suppose, a little later, I must have been old enough to go on to the Methodist church, which was not too many blocks away. Their Sunday school was a little later, but they used the same lessons [laughter], so I was a bright and shining light at the Methodist Sunday school, having already gone through it at the other one.

Then, later, so far as I remember, my mother never went to church. Just why this would have been--my father's work schedule or my mother [had] a sense of inferiority that was terrible and partly was due to her size. I haven't mentioned yet--

### Mother's Sense of Inferiority

Shearer: What was her size? How did she look?

Cox: She was 4'10". She said she'd always taken pride in the fact that somebody said, "Diamonds"--or something--"come in small packages," and then somebody told her, "So does poison." [laughter] So, she couldn't even fall back on that.

Her mother (my grandmother), my Aunt Jessie, and my mother had very thin hair, very thin hair. My mother even once--I guess, before she was married; it would have been in her younger days--had her head shaved because there was some thought that would improve the situation. They all had very poor hair.

Cox: So, when I was born with curly hair, my mother took a tremendous amount of pleasure out of my hair. I was going to high school before I did my own hair. She curled it every morning in curls. Even when I was in high school, I'd just tie it back with a ribbon; you know, it wasn't ringlets. But anyway, I was a grown girl before she quit doing my hair. Because of all this, I hesitated a long time before having my hair cut. Something just held me back.

Shearer: Was she a pretty woman too?

Cox: Yes. I can show you pictures. Do you want to come upstairs?

Shearer: Oh, I'd love to.

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Cox: [material added by Mrs. Cox] I have referred a number of times to my mother's lack of self esteem. I think this may have been due to several factors. In the first place, she was small, under five feet in height. As the second oldest (and oldest girl) in a family of six children, she was perhaps early given responsibilities beyond her years, which may have led to a feeling of failure. Her father drank to excess. This may have been one of the reasons for leaving Jackson. When she was working in San Francisco, she often had to look her father up, when he was on a binge, and get him home on the ferryboat to Berkeley, where they were then living.

She had girl cousins in San Francisco, who were about her age and who worked in the same office. Some of the San Francisco and Berkeley relatives were also in better financial circumstances. They were more buxom than she, and were more sophisticated in dress and manner. The fact that her hair was so thin was a continual source of disappointment to her. All of this tended to increase what may have been an innate shyness; at any rate she failed to assert herself. She was very close to her mother, who was of a more dominant nature.

Many years later, a younger male cousin in San Francisco was married to a young woman from a prominent San Francisco family. The reception was held at the Palace Hotel. The three women on this side of the Bay (my mother, grandmother, and aunt) were reluctant to go. I was sent as the representative of the family. The family dressmaker made me a coat, with an astrakan collar and cuffs.

I do not remember any of the details of the affair, but a young relative about my age was sent to escort me to the Ferry Building, where I got a ferry to come home. What the relatives thought of sending a sixteen year old girl on such an errand, I can only imagine.  
[end of added material]

Parental Expectations and Standards of Behavior##

[Interview 2: October 27, 1980]

Shearer: I guess, in this interview, we could pick up what we omitted from the reminiscence about your childhood, and talk a little bit about the style of parenting of your mother and father. You had made some notes on your parents' expectations for you as a child and for your brother, Wilber, as well.

Cox: Yes. Well, you spoke about discipline. I really can't remember how we were disciplined. [laughter] I don't ever recall being spanked, for instance, or corporal punishment. My only idea about it would be that we just knew by osmosis what the expectations were, that you were supposed to be honest or you were supposed to be prompt. I remember (or was later told) that when my father took me to Park Street, on a shopping trip, I was to hold my hands behind my back--to remind me not to touch anything.

I don't recall, really, other than [their] subtle expectations, and that I lived up to them, that we were ever really disciplined; that is to say, made to--or at school, made to stay after school. I was a good citizen [chuckles], I guess, that type of thing, so that I don't recall, really, what you would think of as being disciplined in a corporal sense.

My mother and father, as I think I've indicated, didn't have many expectations for themselves. My father was interested in supporting his family and earning a living. My mother was the seek-peace-and-pursue-it type who saw herself as a housewife and a child rearer. When I or my brother later began to do well in school, I think they put all of their eggs into their children's baskets. They had no ambitions for themselves. They were willing to make sacrifices for us. They were very proud of us.

Perhaps I've said we were not a demonstrative family, but I don't recall ever missing that or having any idea in the world that they didn't love me or weren't later proud of me.

Shearer: Did they have to make sacrifices, for example? I mean, were your family finances such that to dress you in the style and quality that your peers enjoyed would have meant a sacrifice?

Cox: It would have been, except that I don't remember ever having been clothes conscious. Now, which was the cart and which was the horse, I don't know. I think I have said before, we didn't go to the store then and buy clothes off the rack. My mother made my clothes. She was a plain seamstress and didn't go in for fancy

Cox: patterns, so that I was always neatly dressed but not elaborately dressed. On special occasions--that would have been when I got married, for instance, a dressmaker friend of the family made clothes. I did not dress as expensively as my friends, but that didn't bother me. I didn't care about that.

This may have been [due to] my mother, who dressed very plainly, because I had friends of the same economic background as myself who did pay more attention to clothes and whose mothers were more interested in frills or fancy things. So, the fact that I, up until the time that I was, I guess, in college, did not dress as well, perhaps, as some of my friends or the people I was going around with, didn't bother me. To this day, I am not particularly clothes conscious.

Shearer: You said that you seemed to have absorbed, perhaps by osmosis, your parents' standards for yourself. Can you think of what behavior or what actions might have made you feel that you had let them down?

Cox: I remember one night, going out to a "social" and feeling guilty for leaving my mother, as she was not feeling well. During the party, I had the distinct feeling she was calling me. I left early, but upon arriving home, found she did not need me. So much for a guilty conscience!

Well, by the time I got, we'll say, of high school age, at this point my social activities were perhaps largely associated with the church and the young people's group there because I didn't have any boyfriends in high school. When I would go to these affairs, my mother always said, "Don't forget that you come of a long line of ladies." I thought that was a little funny because I had always thought of ladies as being on a higher economic level than we! [laughter] Anyway, that was my mother's statement.

Shearer: [laughter] What did that mean to you?

Cox: Well, it just meant to be circumspect and get home on time. [laughter]

Young people in those days in my circle of life didn't have the temptations that teenagers have today. I don't remember that we ever had any problem with beer, for instance, or liquor. Certainly, there was no problem with smoking. I remember when I caught my brother smoking away from home and wondered whether I should report it. Certainly, marijuana had not been invented in those days. So, young people in those days, really, I think, could live a rather circumspect life without being put under peer pressure to do other things.

Instruction on Sex and Birth Control

Cox: As far as sex outside of marriage, I don't know that that ever occurred to me, it was enough of a mystery to have sex in marriage, for which I was not terribly prepared. [laughter]

Shearer: Did your mother prepare you at all? Did she give you any information?

Cox: Well, she had to tell me the facts of life, because when we lived on the farm, as I think I have said, I was upset about the way the roosters were treating the hens and I used to go out in the chicken yard and shoo them away. So, she had to take me aside and explain the facts of life to me. It was during that time that I menstruated for the first time, and she must have told me something about that earlier because I don't recall that as any particular shock. /

Shearer: On the other hand, did you feel pleased that you were now a woman? Did it have any particular significance to you?

Cox: No. Those were the days when menstruation was called "the curse," and it was just a big nuisance. [chuckles] I was a grown woman before I discovered you could go in swimming while you were menstruating. It was just considered a time when you were out of the running for a period of time, and it was just a big nuisance. There was no thought of the glory of approaching womanhood and all that business, like we try to tell the girls now. And even now I'm not sure it goes over very big. [laughter] It still is a nuisance, regardless of how glorified it may be. Of course, even sanitary napkins had not been invented in those days. We wore pads of material, which we then washed and used again another time. I've heard my mother talking about when they lived in San Francisco, they didn't even rinse them out; they just sent the soiled pads to the Chinese laundry with the rest of the laundry. So, I was a grown woman before sanitary napkins came out, and of course, tampons had not been invented in those days either, nor mentioned on television. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Certainly not, certainly not. That must have seemed liberating, I imagine, not to have to bother with the laundering of them.

Cox: Yes, yes, because it was a problem, for instance, going to school, when I was going to Berkeley, and I'd leave promptly in the morning, 8:00 or 8:30 or so, and not get home until later in the afternoon. During the heavier flow of menstruation, it was very uncomfortable sometimes to be using the same pad all day long, yet it wasn't very convenient, either, to carry materials with you, you see, because it wasn't like a disposable Kotex. [chuckles]

Shearer: Right. That must have been difficult for women working, too, who had to work eight-hour shifts and so forth.

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: I wonder if employers paid any mind to that.

Cox: I don't know. Well, I don't imagine the employers made many concessions; they haven't made too many concessions for women workers up to this day, as in the matter of split shifts, and hours of choice, and that sort of thing.

That was one of the problems during the child-care center days, even to get employers to take into account that it was more difficult for a woman with children to be working in a shipyard than a man. They were not willing to make any concessions toward women because of their responsibilities with the children, as far as hours of work, conditions of work, were concerned. That was not taken into consideration.

I believe that nowadays some firms have children centers on their premises, or they make some effort to reconcile the special needs of women with children who work, rather than expect them to conform to the average, regular, normal pattern.

Shearer: Yes. I suspect it's not the norm; it's the exception.

Cox: Now, to go back again to my instruction by my mother. My mother never felt comfortable speaking about sex, but before I was married, she told me a few things about herself and my father (that he was "always considerate"). I think my mother would have thought it immodest and unladylike for a woman to enjoy the sex act.

When I was going to be married, and a friend of mine was going to be married about the same time, we used to get together, and there was a lot of talk about the "safe period" and that sort of thing. My mother saw to it that my prospective husband and myself--we didn't go together, but she made appointments for us to go to see a physician in town to have everything explained to us. He told me my ideas of birth control (by abstinence unless a child was desired) were idealistic and unrealistic and he gave me a prescription for contraception.

Shearer: Really? What was it?

Cox: I don't know. We never used it. [laughter]

Shearer: Was it something you took like a pill?

Cox: No. It was a spermicide of some kind which was to be inserted a certain period before intercourse, twenty minutes or thirty minutes or something. My mother had made the arrangements. So, for all of her Puritanism, she was really quite modern and up to date in that respect.

Shearer: Did you get the feeling that this was practiced by her friends as well, that this was sort of known among married women, or was she unusual in that respect?

Cox: Well, I have reason to believe that my father, at least in the very beginning, used a condom, and that that got to be kind of a nuisance, and that's why I appeared. [laughter] That is what I have assumed, because I was born very shortly, nine months and eleven days after their wedding. [laughter]

But she was very reluctant to discuss this type of thing, except that in my Margaret Sanger days--by then I was in college--and I was talking very freely, as I realize now, about something I didn't know anything about, my grandmother was pretty upset about it that I had so much to say, until my mother stopped her by saying, "Why didn't you have more than six children?" My grandmother replied that she'd gotten onto something.

So, my mother was quite protective of me and I think perhaps proud of me for being modern, more than she was able to be herself. I sometimes think that she lived a rather vicarious life through my activities.

Shearer: You were saying earlier that although you didn't have a lot of physical affection, demonstrative behavior, from your parents, you always felt well reinforced emotionally. They always came to school affairs when you would be--?

Cox: Yes, yes. I mentioned the fact that my father was handicapped because of the hours of his work, so that we used to almost have a slogan in the family that if there was anything that we wanted to do together, he was on the night run.

When I was on the debating team at high school--the only girl--and we debated a team in Berkeley, my family was very pleased about that and bought me a little piece of jewelry, which I still have. It was a lavalier with an amethyst on it.

Helping Around the House

Shearer: You said you also had some notes on the style of living, children's responsibilities, what kind of tasks you were asked to perform.

Cox: Well, on the ranch I had certain responsibilities, to help feed the chickens and that sort of thing. But at home in Alameda, more or less I was supposed to do the dishes every night.

I did very little cooking. In fact, by the time I was married I really knew very little about cooking. My mother had always done that. There again, like dressmaking, she was a very plain cook and didn't make elaborate dishes and so on. She made very good pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving. She had one cake that was her specialty. But she wasn't an adventuresome cook.

Then, as I mentioned earlier, my brother was supposed to wipe the dishes. Then it was also my responsibility--and this was usually to be done on Saturday--to do the dusting. In the beginning, we didn't have a vacuum cleaner, so I would use a carpet sweeper. Once a year we would take the rugs out on the line and beat them--that type of thing. This was "spring house-cleaning." I determined that in my own house I would always be so clean that this would be unnecessary. Little did I know!

Then, in those days, the school activities, football games and so on, were usually on a Saturday. I believe now they're frequently Fridays in the late afternoon or evening. But my mother was very willing then, when I would want to do school things on Saturday, to readjust the schedule and to let me, say, do the dusting or whatever after I got home from school on Friday, so that I would be free on Saturday. She was willing to make concessions in order to allow me to have certain freedoms. None of this, of course, would be done on Sunday. You didn't do that kind of thing on Sunday; that is to say, house cleaning. Well, you had to cook and eat, and you had to wash dishes, but she would not have approved of doing other housework.

Shearer: Did she cook ahead sometimes?

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: You mentioned that one year she encouraged you to make a bureau scarf for your grandmother because she was such an excellent seamstress, but that it was a real ordeal for you.

Cox: Yes. I was not good with my hands, to coordinate. It was the custom or her idea that I should make something for each of my grandmothers. This would have been when I was, say, ten, twelve years old, you see. It was always a great burden to find something that would look like anything when it was finished and yet be within my capabilities, you see, to perform. [laughter] I have one now that one of my grandmothers gave me later on. It is, I think I said, three handkerchiefs sewed together with a netting and then embroidery threads threaded through the netting to give a little color and all. But it was very difficult to find something, and there was a lot of agony, and all the ripping out afterward, because I could never learn to tat or to crochet or to knit or things at which they seemed to be very expert, that they got a great deal of pleasure out of when they were doing it, and the finished product gave them a great deal of pride--pillow covers, bureau scarves, camisole tops. I just wasn't any good at that.

#### Pastimes and Pleasures

Shearer: Did your mother read for pleasure as well?

Cox: Yes. There were always books or magazines in the house. My parents were given a set of Shakespeare as a wedding present, which I still refer to when I want to do a crossword puzzle. [laughter] Later on--I suppose by then I was going on to high school--they bought a set of encyclopedias, the Encyclopedia Britannica, which I think must have been something of an expense to them and which I didn't ever find too helpful. It was more fun to go to the library [laughter] than to dig it out at home.

But they did these things in order too--well, I had music lessons, for instance. There again, my mother had a very difficult time, because when I was practicing she would be out in the kitchen, and I didn't know it but both hands weren't coming down at the same time [laughter]. There would be a [discrepancy] of a quarter of a second or so, you know. Well, they finally gave up on me because it was obvious I wasn't going to become a musician.

My mother was quite a good musician, considering the fact that she never had any training or lessons, and it was always a great pleasure to her family. Particularly, I remember one of her brothers who always enjoyed coming and hearing her play. There was one particular piece that was entirely on the black keys, "Black Key Polka" or something, and that was one of her favorites, or his favorites.

Shearer: Did you have a radio?

Cox: Oh, no! [laughter]

Shearer: I'm trying to think; when did radio--? That's right. Well, that was after you were married, wasn't it?

Cox: [laughter] Well, I have up on a shelf the first radio that my husband made with a Quaker Oats box, wound with wires and a cat's whisker to bring in the station.

Shearer: You don't mean literally a cat's whisker?

Cox: Well, a little, tiny, fine wire or something that was called a cat's whisker. You had to tinker around on this little piece of metal to bring the station in. That would have been in, oh, by now, the 1920s or '25. You had to use an earpiece--earphones. Then, of course, you had to be stationary; you couldn't circulate. [chuckles] That was the way I spent a good deal of time darning socks or doing the family mending, those evenings when my husband would be out to an organization meeting of some kind and I would be home and had mending to do. It was a great way to pass the time because I would be sedentary anyway, you see. We had a white enamel tray that this apparatus could be carried around on. He made a radio for me and one for my mother; I still have one up on the shelf.

Shearer: What about family occasions? Did you have trips that you would take?

Cox: We didn't go in automobiles in those days either. [Even for family gatherings at Christmas and Thanksgiving] it was on the streetcar, so that there was a lot of logistics involved in that.

Shearer: Yes, just the process of getting there.

Cox: Yes. As time went on, the younger generation got a little fed up on all that, so that those things fell apart.

[As a child I was] rather restricted then to neighborhood friends. I didn't have friends in the other end of town particularly; they were friends within my neighborhood area, partly again because of the difficulties of transportation. I just didn't know people very well. In fact, when I got to high school, my acquaintanceship was broadened quite a bit because there was only one high school in the town at that time, and so I came to know people who were coming from other elementary schools around town.

But we had birthday parties around our own neighborhood. Among all of us, there were, I suppose, several birthday parties a year or whatever, you see, because there were quite a few of us neighborhood children together.

Passing on a Love of Books

Shearer: Did you ever get together with your parents around books that you had in the house? I mean, did they read the Shakespeare to you, or read them themselves?

Cox: I don't recall that, but I remember that I would be very disappointed if a birthday or a Christmas went by that I didn't get books. My aunt in Berkeley, the one that graduated in 1897, was the one who gave me a complete set of Louisa Alcott--one volume at a time per Christmas or a birthday. The first one, Little Women, was of a different binding but from then on it was all the same publisher, so that aside from Little Women all the rest of them were in the same binding. Then my next-door neighbor Gladys--I still have books that she gave me.

Shearer: What ones did you like best?

Cox: Well, in those days, I thought it would be fun to go to boarding school, and then there was "The Lamplighter" and stories of girls in boarding [school]. I don't remember, for instance, the so-called Elsie Dinsmore books. That was after my time. I don't remember that series. By the time my children were little, of course, it was the Bobbsey Twins.

Shearer: Did you read What Happened at Miss Minchin's?

Cox: No.

Shearer: About Sarah Crewe.

Cox: No, I don't remember that.

Shearer: Maybe that was a little later.

Cox: I still have books that my grandmother gave me, and my next-door neighbor. I was always interested in reading, and my family encouraged it by providing the materials, but I don't recall--it's possible that they read to me when I was little, but I wouldn't remember that.

There was, however, one book that my own children enjoyed, and I'm surprised that the same edition is still available, and I saw to it that my grandchildren got copies of it. That's Mother Goose, and the edition is still available, because it still has the checkerboard paper.

Shearer: Oh, I have it for my children too. What is it called? The Original--something or other--Mother Goose.

Cox: Yes. It had the black and white checkerboard paper jacket.

Shearer: Yes, exactly the same. The Real Mother Goose. That's what it's called.

Cox: Yes, that's it. Well, the one that's upstairs is pretty much in shreds by now because my own children and then my grandchildren--and I saw to it that when they were little they got the same edition. So, it's always been my custom to give the grandchildren--and, of course, my own children when they were small--in addition to whatever else they got for Christmas, they always got a book. Now it is magazines.

One of my children, I finally decided, was not so terribly interested in the book as it was that reading allowed him to avoid going to the park, for instance. He was using reading, I thought, as a refuge as much as a pleasure.

Shearer: Was that David?

Cox: No, that was Paul.

Shearer: At that time, he didn't enjoy whooping it up outside?

Cox: No.

Shearer: How old was he then?

Cox: Well, I suppose he was by now ten or twelve or so.

Later, he went to the park a great deal to play basketball, not organized basketball but to shoot balls. But the two older boys were not particularly interested, I think, in body contact and they didn't enjoy the park as much as the younger one did.

Then, I remember, when I'd call Paul to dinner, he would want to read a little longer, so I'd say, "Well, finish that chapter." Then I'd have to be sure what chapter we were talking about!  
[laughter]

Shearer: So that he didn't go on to the next one. [laughter]

Cox: You have to be on your toes sometimes to stay one jump ahead of them.

Shearer: Oh, yes, indeed.

Church: A Social Center in Childhood

Shearer: What did the churchgoing mean to you as a child when you were going to the Christian church and then the Methodist?

Cox: Well, it was purely a social activity, as far as I was concerned. I never was "converted." The Methodist church was then--I'm not sure about now--quite evangelical, evangelistic, and they wanted you to give your heart to Jesus. [chuckles] I had no idea in the world what that meant. But I was interested in the young people's groups.

Later on, I taught Sunday school. By this time I was, say, a freshman at the University, and I had a class of girls not too much younger than I who got a big thrill out of having a Sunday school teacher who was going to college. One day I was going to take them on a picnic and I said we'd go to the "Big C." Well, they thought it was going to be a s-e-a. [laughter] When we got there, they were a little disappointed. (I am still in touch with several of these "girls.")

But in my younger days, there were both the Sunday school and a young people's organization. There was, oh, I suppose, when I was fourteen, fifteen, a group called Queen Esther's, which was a youth group in the Methodist church for girls.

On one occasion, a missionary from Japan had come back. Whether this was to be a money-raising affair or whether it was just a social affair, I don't remember. But she had all these Japanese kimonos and coached us in a Japanese ceremony; whether it was the tea ceremony, I'm not sure. But the embarrassing thing was that at one of the strategic points, when I was to kneel, my knees cracked. [laughter]

Shearer: Oh, dear! [laughter]

Cox: Well, all you could do was pull yourself together and go on, you know. [laughter]

Then my boyfriend, who became my husband, by this time was playing baseball on Sundays, and he felt he couldn't get home from the game, get cleaned up and so on, and get back to the young people's meeting. Well, before too long, he was managing it. [laughter] So then we would stay to church in the evening, but that was only just an excuse to be together.

Shearer: How old were you then?

Cox: Well, by now it was 1914 and '15. I was nineteen, twenty years old.

Shearer: And where did you meet?

Cox: At the church. I've always said the church did me one thing: it found me a husband. [chuckles] It may not have made any reservations in heaven, but--! [laughter] I have no interest in [that]. I am different here from my friend Gladys; I think she really believes in heaven. I have no interest in the hereafter. I assume that we came from nothing or--well, we came from something. But I mean I have no thought of the future or of heaven or the hereafter.

Shearer: And no particular apprehensions?

Cox: No, no. I figure, when it's over, it's over. I just hope it goes over smoothly! [laughter] You know, without too much effort. But my feeling of immortality is your children or the influence you have left behind you. I figure, when it's over, that's the end. I have no deep religious beliefs.

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#### Mother's Religious Views

Shearer: How do you think your mother viewed life after life, or life after death? Did she believe in it?

Cox: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. She might have expressed herself more if my father had not been rather cynical. In spite of the fact that he was the oldest child in his family and his mother was a very devout Methodist--this was in Nova Scotia. Apparently, she [his mother] at one time had some interest in his becoming a minister, because he was a good speaker and did well on those Fridays when they had elocution at the school when he went to school. But by the time I knew him, he would kind of poke fun at religion. If my mother had wanted to go and do things, he certainly would never have stood in her way, but he didn't encourage her. Both because of her temperament and because of the fact that she considered her role in life to be a wife and mother, she did make very few efforts to go outside the home. Then, again, his hours being so irregular, it would have been difficult for her to have planned regular attendance at anything. However, the fact that she was always quoting "seek peace and pursue it"--that would be a biblical reference, but what she really felt about the hereafter, I don't know. I am sure she enjoyed her Bible. She was very devoted to

Cox: her mother in my grandmother's later years. But I really don't know. At least she didn't make any effort to indoctrinate me in any of her religious beliefs.

Shearer: Did she speak of God as though He existed?

Cox: No, I don't recall any of that.

Shearer: Do you think that concept existed for her?

Cox: I don't recall any of that.

I have Bibles that were my grandmother's and my mother's. I know in the days when she lived in San Francisco when she was a young woman, and this would be before she was married, she belonged to groups, perhaps Bible study groups.

In connection with the church, there was a group of women like herself--and I'm thinking of when she was older--who met in each other's homes and used certain scripture lessons that were sent out by the church. They had these meetings, and she was usually secretary of the group, but I never attended any of those, and so I don't know.

When we were talking about family get-togethers, I should have mentioned that in later years there were a number of family women who met very regularly. Now, I was not a part of this because by then I was married with small children, and it was kind of a bore to me because my mother would always want me to haul the children up there to let the relatives see them. [chuckles] But there was my mother, and her sister, and her mother (that is, my grandmother), and then a couple of other relatives who all lived on this side of the Bay. They met rather regularly around one place and another, just for perhaps lunch or a tea party, and usually on an anniversary or a birthday. They were, of course, older than I. As I said, my mother always wanted me to haul the children up so she could show off her grandchildren.

Another family custom which my mother observed concerned anniversaries of her wedding. She had a small box with mementoes of the wedding and at each five-year anniversary, she opened the box. She noted who were with her on that day; what family happenings had taken place in the intervening five years (marriages, births, and deaths). The box was then sealed again with adhesive tape, to wait for another five years. I still have the box.

So, my mother had a very strong family feeling, as did these other people. Some of them were blood relatives, and some were, oh, in-laws, for instance, of the blood relatives.

Early Ambitions

Shearer: You mentioned that you had some very strong ambitions and daydreams or dreams of future glory. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Cox: Well, I remember--of course, by now I would have been in high school. I don't remember any burning ambitions of any kind until I got into high school. For a long while I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but I realized that that was largely because I saw lawyers as speaking a good deal. When I began to think that maybe I'd wind up being a law clerk doing research [chuckles], or that I might have to defend someone that I knew was guilty [laughter], I thought that would be an ethical problem that would be too much for me, so I got bravely over that ambition.

But I guess I've always thought of doing things where I would be speaking. I enjoy speaking. I, in some of my volunteer activities, have spoken to rather large groups. In the PTA days, there might be as many as five or six hundred in a conference. It usually went well. The first time, I was scared to death, but after it happened a few times I was more at ease.

This happened in high school, too, some. I felt that I could control, and perhaps I get a feeling of a sense of power out of having a--I think I like to run things. [laughter] That's my vice. [laughter] When I was young, I used to daydream about being in an emergency--such as a theater fire--and marshalling people to safety. I like to organize things.

Shearer: You felt you could kind of work an audience?

Cox: Yes, yes, and that I had people in my power. Well, you can't do that by sheer force of willpower; you have to have some ability to hold their interest or keep them interested, which I felt that I had.

In high school, we used to have student body meetings. Of course, the whole high school was only a few hundred people. But we used to have student body meetings very frequently. These might be--not necessarily a business meeting, just sort of a program type of meeting. I remember that I used to do book reviews; that is, to tell the story of a book. One that I still remember doing was "The Lady or the Tiger." Do you remember that?

Shearer: Oh, yes.

Cox: Well, that was one of my favorites.

Cox: Then a very good friend of mine was an excellent pianist, and she used to play the piano.

Then, I was willing to speak in front of the student body, when many of the girls were not. Frequently people who wanted announcements made of meetings, we'll say, of certain organizations--and perhaps I did not belong to that organization--would ask me to make the announcement for them because they were too shy or whatever. Well, after a few times, I could see that it wasn't very logical for me to be making announcements for something in which I was not personally involved; that was sort of silly. But it was not easy perhaps for very many people and certainly not for girls, to be speaking in public.

Shearer: When was the earliest that you were called upon to speak before a group and found you enjoyed it? Was it in grammar school?

Cox: I don't remember much of this in grammar school, but certainly by the time I got to high school. Well, for instance, this was, I guess, before the CSF (California Scholarship Federation), and we had a local honor society called The Star and Key. We had our own pins, and I remember being in the group that wrote up the ritual or sort of an initiation type of thing. I realize now this is a rather customary thing, but I didn't realize it in those days. Many fraternal organizations have you go around, you know, from one post to the other. I don't seem to have realized at the time that that was a customary ritual type of thing to go from one station to another.

In the still younger days, when I used to take elocution lessons, that was only speaking before the group; that is to say, your own club or whatever.

Shearer: This was a club outside of school.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Was this the one that was held in the basement of your friend's [house]?

Cox: Yes. Addie Combs' basement. [laughter]

Shearer: Was it a professional tutor who coached you?

Cox: Well, this woman who was the leader or the teacher was scarcely a professional, but she had done a great deal at least in amateur things, and perhaps had done a little writing herself, and was known in the community as being an "arty" person. She was the teacher. I suppose that we all paid. I suppose my family paid for that. I don't exactly remember, but we must have.

Cox: Later, when Addie Combs' basement wasn't sufficient any longer [chuckles], whether it was still Mrs. Sturtevant, I wouldn't remember, but we met in a lodge hall here in Alameda where there must have been rent involved, you see. Here again, there was the Indian club swinging and marching in formation and so on, which I enjoyed. In spite of the fact that I'm not musical--that is to say, [in] performing music--I am appreciative of rhythmic things, to march in concert and to counterwheel and all that business; I didn't very often lose my place. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] If you had, you would have been badly bruised, throwing Indian clubs around.

When you took elocution lessons, how did you envision yourself as the product of this training, as a beautiful lecturer on the platform?

Cox: No. As I think now, I don't think I saw that as leading to anything. It was just sort of a fulfillment or an extracurricular activity which was enjoyable for its own sake, and that's as far as it went. I don't remember thinking that that might lead to anything. I'm thinking, as I look back on it now, perhaps it did give me self-confidence or a willingness to stand before a group. But I don't recall that I thought about it at the time. It was just as if I were going to a play or something, only this time it was just something in which I was participating myself, just a fun activity type of thing.

Shearer: What was the total enrollment of your grammar school. Do you remember?

Cox: Well, each class wouldn't have been more than twenty or twenty-five, so I suppose there wouldn't have been more than a few hundred. Then in the high school when I went, the enrollment was, we'll say, five hundred or so on. In my graduating class there were thirty-eight, twenty-five girls and thirteen boys.

#### The Small Town Grows Up

Cox: Alameda in those days had a population that ranged in the thirty thousands.

Shearer: This was about 1912?

Cox: Yes. Alameda had experienced some growth, when families settled here after leaving San Francisco after the fire in 1906. Then by 1940 or so, with a lot of ballyhoo and the Chamber of Commerce and all, it had gotten up to like 60,000 or 70,000. Then came the war years; that is, the Second World War. There was ship-building and other war effort in the Bay Area. Some University of California land in Alameda was either purchased or leased or something, and the federal government put in wartime housing. People were recruited from other parts of the country to come, and the population went up to about 100,000. It is now 63,852 according to 1980 census.

Current census figures for Alameda depend on whether or not the census officials include the crew of the aircraft carrier which is home-ported at the Naval Air Station. When the crew is included, Alameda benefits when certain moneys are appropriated on the basis of population.

So, the city had a real problem. Of course, from the 30,000 to the original 70,000 was rather a slow, moderate growth. From the 70,000 to 100,000 was really a big influx, in the schools, in the--

Shearer: Yes. And who were the people who constituted this additional influx?

Cox: Well, many of them were from the Midwest or the South. This was a problem, as I have understood it, because many of these people had not realized that we had rather strict compulsory education laws here in California. They came out, either recruited definitely, or just because they saw opportunities. They came with families, expecting to put everybody to work and make their fortunes. They got here and found California had different compulsory education laws from the states from which they had come, and found to their surprise that they had to put the children in school rather than to work.

Shearer: Were they people of matching socio-economic status largely, or was it a big influx of lower middle class?

Cox: Yes, it would have been the latter, because the population in Alameda had very few poverty level people, I would say, prior to this. Not everybody was affluent by any manner of means, of course.

Shearer: This is prior to 1912?

Cox: Well, I'm talking now of even just prior to the Second World War, where the population growth had been of middle class or upper middle class, and there were very few--what do they call it? "Impact areas," I think, is the term the federal government uses now for federal funds. There were very few of those.

But then when the Second World War attracted all these people to the West Coast and a share to Alameda, many of them were of a lower socio-economic class than were here already. Particularly there were more minorities, and particularly there were more blacks, so that there was quite a change in the mixture. Before this there were only a few black families in Alameda. One family had a hauling business and would take your trunk to the train depot when you went on a trip.

Shearer: In the '40s, yes.

Cox: Now, at the present time, there are a considerable number of Filipinos and a reasonable number of Vietnamese refugees who have settled here. So, there's a very different cultural mix, certainly, from fifty years ago, or even from forty years ago.

Shearer: I want to just be sure that we get on the tape the comment that you made earlier off tape about the way the school system is arranged, in which the kindergarten through fourth grade is in one segment, and then fifth through eighth, and--

Cox: Yes. Alameda never went into the junior high system. Junior high was seven, eight, and nine. It would be K through six; and then seven, eight, nine; and a three-year high school. Alameda never went into that. In the earlier days, it was first through eighth. Then later, kindergartens became a part of the state school system; they were not, of course, in the beginning. Then it was K through eight, and then a four-year high school. In the beginning, when other cities were going into the junior high system, there was some thought that Alameda was kind of pokey and not up with things. As it turned out, I think now that people are beginning to raise questions about the value of pushing young children into a more sophisticated life like some of the junior highs are. Perhaps Alameda being slow at it turned out for the best.

At the present time, it's more or less a four, four, four. That is to say, the primary school, K through four or five; and then the middle school, so-called, which would be six, seven, eight; and then there are still two--

Shearer: Excuse me. Wouldn't it be K to five and then six, seven, eight?

Cox: Well, depending. Yes. Some of the schools are K through four; occasionally it's K through five. Then the next would be either five through eight, or six through eight. But at the top, so-called, there are in Alameda two four-year high schools; that is, nine through twelve.

Shearer: I see.

Cox: And now we have a campus of the Peralta Community College District, the College of Alameda, which is grades thirteen and fourteen.

Shearer: I've been there just recently, and it's a very pleasant setting, I must say.

Cox: Yes, very nice, the landscaping and the building. It is comparatively new. There used to be wartime housing on that [site]. In fact, it was non-commissioned officers' housing and it was called Splinterville [by] local Alamedans who looked down their noses at it. It was substandard and not very elegant Navy housing, and it was called Splinterville by Alamedans who didn't think too much of it.

#### Saturday Matinees and Rowing at Lincoln Park

Shearer: What did you do for amusements? Did you go to the theater as a child?

Cox: Yes. There were neighborhood groups that--as I've said, birthday parties and so on. We played with marbles--played hopscotch and had indoor games such as Flinch and other types of table games. There was a park, Lincoln Park, where we went sometimes.

One time I was going to try to learn to play tennis, but that didn't work out very well either. My family got me the racket and all. My coordination at tennis isn't any better than it is at other types of things.

My next-door neighbor and I used to go to the matinee on Saturdays.

Shearer: This is Gladys McNutt?

Cox: Yes, Gladys. By then I would have been fourteen, fifteen, or so. There was a resident company in Oakland. The theater was called Ye Liberty. Two popular resident members were Marjorie Rambeau and

Cox: James (Jimmy) Gleason. There was another theater called McDonough's; I'm not sure whether McDonough's had a resident company or whether it had traveling companies. That was where I saw Ben Hur with the horses.

Shearer: Ben Hur on a stage with the horses?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: How did they stage the chariot race? That's amazing.

Cox: It was some sort of a moving--I never got behind the stage to see how it was done.

But the Ye Liberty that had the resident company, that was all plays or romances, and I used to go home and dream about the leading man. [laughter]

Another favorite place for outings was Idora Park, located in the vicinity of Telegraph Avenue and 45th Street. Gladys and I, alone or with a group or with family members, enjoyed trips there. There was a skating rink, other attractions, and a theater where Ferris Hartman was a star.

About that same time, we had a rowing club up here at Lincoln Park. The park director at that time was interested in boating. He had somehow or other gotten hold of an eight-oar rowboat. I suppose it was a leftover from the Coast Guard, or a life-saving boat. We had a regular club with organization and minutes and all and reports. We'd go on rowing expeditions all up in this end of town, up through the marsh area.

Shearer: You and who?

Cox: Well, my girlfriends--Gladys, Maybelle, and Eva. I have some photographs of that too. We used to row and knew what it meant to feather your oars and certain other nautical terms. Then we would be assigned topics on the flora and fauna of the marshland up here in the estuary and the sloughs, on which to report, so that it was recreational and educational. I'm sure that I have some of the minutes because I was usually secretary or something. [chuckles]

Shearer: Was this unusual to have a group of girls rowing?

Cox: I think it would be, yes. I was talking not too long ago to a woman who has just recently retired from the Alameda Recreation Department. I think she had never heard of it because, for whatever reason, it didn't last for long. The particular group that I was with would have grown beyond it or scattered as we got older, and why it didn't continue, I don't know.

Shearer: You were fifteen then?

Cox: Yes, I suppose, fifteen, sixteen. In fact, I came across a snapshot just recently. To begin with, I thought it was all just girls around our neighborhood, but when I saw this snapshot the other day I realized that one of the girls lived farther away, so that it must have been perhaps a high school age group. But it was organized through the man who was the park director up here at this local park.

Shearer: I see. But you were at the park often enough to hear about it and act on the information?

Cox: Well, it was a weekly affair. We used to go out. He and his brother had built a little house out--you had to go on a trestle out a little ways. Now, this house was built like a miniature, or patterned after a castle on the Rhine. It looked like a little castle. It was called Philani, and that was because his brother was Phil, so Philani was "Phil and I." And the "I" was John. [chuckles] It was John who was the park director. The family is still around and still interested in boating.

Shearer: What was the family name?

Cox: Gutleben. There are still Gutlebens around who are interested in boating.

Shearer: What an appropriate name. [translating from German] Goodlife.

Cox: That was before the Park Department was as well organized, of course, as it became later. I wouldn't have any idea still; I suppose Mr. Gutleben must have been paid, but who paid him--that was really before there was an organized Park and Recreation Department, as there is now.

### Life on the Right Side of the Tracks

Shearer: Who were some of the fancier people in town? I mean, you described yourself in the last interview as--

Cox: Living on the wrong side of the tracks.

Shearer: Living on the wrong side of the tracks. Who lived on the right side of the tracks? What was the dividing line?

Cox: That was known as the Gold Coast. People that lived there had more money; the houses were very nice. People in those days had to get most of their entertainment at home. You didn't go to a hotel ballroom, for instance, to have a party. The parties were usually given at home. These people had homes that were big enough, with--they didn't call them rumpus rooms, but a family room of some type where they could have their own parties.

Many of the men--I suppose, perhaps, the majority of men--commuted to San Francisco to work. They would be insurance executives, attorneys, men with shipbuilding interests, or commercial, or San Francisco business interests of one kind and another. They were all people who had more money than my family did.

They had social desires and ambitions beyond what--whether if I'd had the money I would have been interested in those things, I have no way of knowing. But I don't remember having any feeling of being inferior or not as desirable. But they dressed more elaborately. They had fancier homes. They were the young people in high school who belonged to the sororities and the fraternities, which were very cliquey in those days, though I believe then they were not illegal.

Shearer: The school frowned on them?

Cox: Well, at one point they became illegal, and we'd have to look that up to get the dates. I'm not sure of that. But certainly the principal of the high school at that time knew who were the influential people in town, and if there was any favoritism to be shown it would have gone their way. It was in that regard that because of my being vocal and willing to take a part in school activities or in running for school office--there were obviously more, as far as numbers were concerned, of my class of people than there were of the more prominent; I mean, prominent from the local community standpoint. So, always--I used to call them the great unwashed--all we needed was a leader, and you had a majority. But the leaders in the school mostly came from the fraternity and sorority groups, and the other people just kind of followed along until they had me to vote for. [laughter]

Shearer: You were the only one from among the people in your--well, is it safe to say "class"?

Cox: More or less, yes. More or less.

Shearer: Economic class too.

Cox: Yes. Among my friends--

Shearer: You didn't have a male counterpart from your economic group?

Cox: No, no, not that I remember. Among my immediate friends, there were not too many of them who were as interested as I in--well, they might have been interested in the Latin club or--not the chess club. [laughter] I wasn't good at chess either. They may have been interested in-- There were class organizations too; I mean, sophomore and freshmen now; I don't mean the socio-economic class. They may have been interested in those things, but I don't recall that any of my good friends were as interested as I in the student body activities or in running for office. Certainly, my friend Gladys was not.

My friend Zdenka was at this point perhaps headed toward a musical career. She was a very good pianist, and at one point she had to decide whether she was going to be a concert pianist or be something else, so that I guess most of her free time was spent practicing and going to music lessons in San Francisco. Every once in so often the group that she belonged to, the Beringer school where she went, would have a recital, and some of us would have to go. [chuckles]

Shearer: You don't sound as though you were--[chuckles]

Cox: [laughter] I didn't appreciate all the fine points of Rachmaninoff, or whose rhapsody is it? Is that Rachmaninoff? Anyway, among us we'd all have to go out of loyalty to her, and maybe the rest of them appreciated it, but my ear was not tuned in that direction.

Shearer: Were there any people here in town, children of parents who had businesses, department stores, or pharmacies, or anything that figured prominently in local society?

Cox: Yes. Well, there were privately owned department stores, dry goods stores. There were several ice cream parlors that were locally owned. But as I remember, there were few children, at least of my age, who were the children of those [people]. I think now of the two dry goods stores in town.

I later became friendly in local PTA activities with a woman who had been a girl of the family who had an ice cream parlor. She remembered delivering ice cream to the nabobs [laughter] on the south shore. But I don't recall that any of my immediate friends were connected with the local businesses.

There was a local bakery; there were the dry goods stores; there were several pharmacies.

##

Finding a Role and Filling It

Cox: I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps. Well, my family--my mother and father--were certainly very supportive of everything I wanted to do. I don't believe they ever tried to talk me out of anything. But since they themselves were so bound to home and work, I didn't get much--what's the word I want?

Shearer: Model?

Cox: Yes, model. They were not role models for me in the way I turned out to be but they certainly gave me every support, so that I think what I became more or less evolved.

I said that I didn't dress as well as some others, but that didn't bother me. I'll be very frank and say that I was pretty. I did not have a good figure; I was rather stocky, and I always thought it would be nice to be lithe. Since my hair was curly, I didn't realize in those days what an advantage that was. [laughter] I can remember having friends who had hair that came clear down to their waist, and I thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to have dark, long, black hair!" [laughter] So, I did not suffer from feeling that I wasn't good-looking, and the fact that I didn't dress more elaborately didn't bother me.

So, I guess, from this time on, I had some feeling of being effective or getting satisfaction out of some type of community, student body, whatever, activity. I got my thrills or my satisfaction out of that sort of thing, rather than being invited to the dances or having a boyfriend who was socially acceptable and all that. I don't recall being unhappy that I was never invited to go to the school dances. The boys that were the big shots never asked me, and I wouldn't have gone with anybody other. [laughter] And also the Methodists didn't believe in dancing in those days either. My father always teased me about my big Methodist feet. [laughter]

Shearer: What did he mean by that?

Cox: Well, he meant that my feet weren't terribly big, but that the Methodist church frowned on dancing. Maybe that's my coordination, too. I've never learned to dance, really.

Shearer: Did your father subscribe to the tenets of the Methodist church at all?

Cox: No. I think I said he didn't hold anybody back, but he had two or three little slangy quotations that he could always pull out if he wanted to hurt my mother: "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, saddle the cat and I'll get on." [laughter] I don't know where he came up with that, but whenever he wanted to really annoy my mother, he'd pull that out. She thought that was pretty sacrilegious, you know.

So, where were we?

Shearer: Dancing. .[laughter]

## III UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The Decision to Attend the University of California##

Shearer: Your mother's sister attended college. Was she the only one of your mother's brothers and sisters to go to college?

Cox: No. She graduated in 1897. Then the youngest child, who was a boy, graduated in, I think, 1901 or 1900.

Shearer: It's interesting that you remember the dates of their educational achievements but are hazy about your mother's educational background. Is that because she didn't speak of it much?

Cox: Well, the reason I'm sure of my aunt is that it was always in talk in the family that I was just twenty years later. I was 1917, and she was 1897. Then I knew that my uncle was a few years younger than she was. My aunt taught in Truckee after she was graduated, and my Uncle Wallace taught in Ione and later in Santa Barbara, after he was married.

Shearer: Were you aware as a young child of your aunt having attended college?

Cox: The reason I went to college--and it was a fluke. I had very few occasions to do this, but one day when I was, we'll say, a senior in high school, I had occasion to go to Oakland and took the streetcar to Oakland. I don't know why, but it was not an everyday affair. One of my teachers, Gertrude Berg, an English teacher, was on the same streetcar, and she asked me what I was going to do. I said I was going to San Francisco Normal School and become a teacher. In those days, that meant two years, and then you could teach in elementary school. She said I was too good a student and asked why I didn't consider going to the University of California.

Cox: So, I came home and told my parents I wanted to go to Berkeley, and that's why I went, how it happened.

Shearer: And that was not considered out of the question or surprising to your parents?

Cox: Well, I don't know. I don't know. I assume that I had thought of going to the normal school because we were a very definitely middle-class family, and then I suppose I thought, "Two years, and out to work." It doesn't sound very modest, but when Miss Berg convinced me that I was of university caliber, the family accepted it, and then I went on a very modest basis. I commuted all the time. I have reason to believe I would have been pledged to one of the sororities if I hadn't broken off the rushing.

Shearer: Why did you break off the rushing?

Cox: Well, I didn't think my family could afford it.

Shearer: I see. It was an expensive proposition, wasn't it.

Cox: Yes. There was one of the sororities on the campus at that time that favored student officers and prided themselves on student activity women. Two of the members were Alamedans, one still in school when I was, one older. They knew of my student body activities at the high school, and I assume that's why I was invited to the preliminary things. Rushing was done differently then than it is now.

After I'd been invited to a few things and they came to call at home and all and the next invitation came, I declined, and that broke it off. [I declined] because I didn't think that my family would be in a position to--or knew they wouldn't be in a position-- [to support the activities] and that didn't particularly bother me. I had not been one of the elite at high school, and I didn't have any ambitions in that direction.

Then another one of my teachers at high school, Thomas Marshall, who later got his doctorate, asked me what I was going to study, and I said, "English and history and become a teacher." He said, "The woods are full of them. Why don't you try something else?" [chuckles] So, that's why I went into economics.

So, it was because of those chance encounters--there was no counseling in those days in schools, and all of this was almost--well, the fact that I met Miss Berg on the streetcar that day was a complete coincidence. [laughter]

Shearer: But she knew of your work though.

Cox: Oh, yes. But now I was a senior. I was a good student. I had done all these things in high school. As I said earlier, I was one of the leaders of the great unwashed. And all the faculty knew me obviously--high school wasn't very big in those days.

Shearer: How big was your school?

Cox: In my graduating class there were thirty-nine students, twenty-six boys and thirteen girls. So, my friend Zdenka and I, so far as I know, were the only ones who went on to Berkeley. One went to Mills [College]--I'm speaking of the girls--and one went to a business school. There was not a particular pressure in those days for a college education. You could get places without an A.B., but now you don't get very far without your doctorate, or your master's anyway. So, those were almost chance encounters that steered me in that direction.

##

#### Prospective Marriage Broadens Academic Options

Shearer: So you hadn't graduated from high school when you decided to go to the San Francisco Normal School?

Cox: Did we have this on tape earlier?

Shearer: You mentioned that you had met a teacher on the streetcar who urged you to consider the University of California.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: When did those plans jell for you?

Cox: I don't remember when I would have decided to go to normal school (which at that time was two years to get an elementary credential). I guess I didn't have any business ambitions; that is to say, to go to business college. And what else was there to do? Women in those days didn't have much choice. If you were going to go to work, you taught, or you became a nurse, or you worked in an office.

I had worked a little bit in an office during summers, because in 1915 there was the exposition in San Francisco. There was quite a bit of opportunity for people--girls, others--to work in connection with the exposition. I remember working ahead of the opening, because there was some baby photograph contest that was being promoted and they had to have a certain amount of preliminary office

Cox: work done. I remember doing that and then meeting Will, and we'd come home together at the end of the day, across the Bay on the ferry. Then at the time of the exposition there were job opportunities for hostesses or receptionists or guides, that type of thing, so that I did some work that way during the exposition.

But I didn't have any particular interest in business. I guess my coordination doesn't work on the typewriter either! [laughter] When I type now, I have to correct an awful lot because my two hands don't work right on the typewriter.

So, I guess it [normal school] was just sort of the thing you did. Then on the streetcar that day--and that was a complete coincidence when my teacher Miss Berg said that I was of a caliber that ought to consider the University of California, and I came home and told my family what I wanted to do, and they agreed to it. So, that was how that happened.

Shearer: Had she given you advice on what to study?

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: How did that come about?

Cox: Her comment was simply that I was of a caliber--[pauses] Shall I say she said I was too good to go to normal school [chuckles] and that I should try the university?

Then I still thought of the university as [an avenue to] a teaching career, so it was another teacher that I had at high school, who was the history man [Thomas Marshall], who asked me then what I was going to study. When I said I was going to teach English and history, he said, "The woods are full of them"--those were his words--and that I should think of something else.

So, that was when my friend Mildred, who hasn't entered the picture much before this, and I decided to become social workers. There was no School of Social Work at that time at the university. We took classes in the economics department and then graduated in what was known as social economics.

Shearer: What did social work mean to you at that time? Helping people?

Cox: Yes. It was casework. This was before the days of psychological emphasis. However, I had a course in psychology at the university; it was psychology of adolescence or something. The social work, help for the unfortunate (or it was called the poor in those days), was not organized the way it is now, obviously. There was no United Way. It was mostly the Associated Charities; it really was private

Cox: charity. But there had to be a certain amount of casework in regard to all of this. There were the mothers' pensions that had to be administered.

So, I guess I was a little vague myself as to what type of a position it would lead to. Obviously, there was no master's degree in social work in those days; your A.B. was as far as you got with it.

When I graduated in May of 1917, I had reason to believe that my fiance could come home on leave and we could be married, so that all of the time, in back of my mind, I knew I was going to be married. That made me freer to choose the courses I took in college. I don't know what I thought then, but I've realized since that as far as raising a family is concerned, the courses I took in geology, anthropology, and in psychology were of great benefit to me, even more than my economics classes, because of the broader view they gave.

As it happens, most of my children went into science of some kind, although they quickly got beyond me. There came a time when I couldn't help them with their homework anymore! [chuckles]

Well, I had this feeling all along in college that I didn't have to try too hard to take something that I'd have to earn my living at, because I knew I was going to get married. That decision had already been made. Also, there was no thought at that time in my life or society that a woman did both. To have a career or get married; it was an either/or proposition which, of course, wasn't quite fair because when nature catches up with you [laughter], you don't have much of a choice, you know.

Shearer: That's right.

Cox: It was much, much later that it became at all possible for a woman to do both without social disadvantages. Even in the schools they frowned on married women teaching--for many, many years.

Then when I realized there was a possibility that Will could come home on leave [in December], I had the question of, how could I look for work in June if I was going to be doing something else by the end of the year? So, I really don't remember exactly what I did in those six months--I'd have to really go back to my notes--between the May that I graduated and the December when I was married.

Shearer: When you entered Cal, at that time you were not then engaged, were you?

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: In 1915?

Cox: I became engaged in 1914, although he was proposing to me [laughter] earlier than that.

So, very early in my college, I was faced with the decision of matrimony, and I had decided that I was in love with him by 1914. He was not a college man himself--and this may have been a problem for him later, but at this point he was very willing and eager to forward my education, and there was no thought of marrying before I finished and all. He was in entire sympathy, and I was very anxious to finish my education and to graduate, and he was fully supportive of that.

Then, we'll say, a year later, by 1915, when it was obvious that he was going to Manila on an assignment, there was still no thought that I would not graduate, and he was in perfect accord with all of that. In fact, I was rather displeased, angry, annoyed, when--people of the church obviously had a lot of suspicion of what was going on, because we were quite devoted--but when somebody was reported to have said that he would have been able to agree to the separation more easily than I. I remember being offended that people had thought that I couldn't hold out, you see, and have him go on and me stay in school.

Those weren't difficult days because I didn't have other boyfriends and, as I say, all of my girlfriends didn't have boyfriends either [chuckles], so we were all on a par there.

Shearer: You did have an understanding with him before he left, though, that you would not see other men?

Cox: No, not particularly. I guess that was just sort of taken for granted.

When he was on the boat in Manila, on the U.S. Army Transport Liscum, there were a lot of army nurses around, and the captain on the boat was quite a jolly soul; he was always promoting things. I remember being a little jealous, whatever, because Will was frequently writing about going off on picnics with Captain Barclay and the nurses. Well, then, later on, some of those nurses came back to the Presidio, and I went over to the Presidio to see them, so that I had some contact with the women who had been over there in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, you see. As far as I have any way of knowing, it was all platonic.

Cox: I assume--I think I'm right in assuming--that my husband was a virgin, as I was, when we were married. In fact, he had a friend in Manila who used to say that he had trouble getting married. He wouldn't marry a woman who hadn't slept with him before marriage, and wouldn't marry any woman that would agree to do this. [laughter] So, he was stuck.

Shearer: [laughter] A terrible dilemma.

Cox: [laughter] The captain of the Liscum was a character. He was really an old bachelor. He was a character and he'd been around there for years. He was a great one for having picnics up the Pasig River on a boat and arranging things. Of course, the army nurses were all there without men, and unless they latched onto a lieutenant--they didn't have much chance with the captains or the majors, you see--so that it was a lonely existence for a bunch of single women. I have no reason to believe that my husband's relations were other than platonic, but at times I wondered. [soft laughter]

Shearer: You said, I think, last time, that you kept the engagement a secret. Why was that?

Cox: Yes. Well, as I recall, there was a lot of debate at that time among people as to how long an engagement ought to be, and that it ought to be long enough that you got to know each other, but there were disadvantages in a long engagement. I think that was our idea. I thought there wasn't any point in announcing an engagement and then having it drift on and on.

### Early Political Influences

Cox: Certainly, I didn't want a ring. Later on, I thought I may have made a mistake about the ring, because I was all full of [Thorstein] Veblen\* in those days, you know, "ostentatious display" and "conspicuous leisure." [laughter] So, I persuaded my husband that I must have a very modest diamond. Later on in my married life, when I'd see other people with much larger ones, I thought maybe I'd overdone it. In those days the idea was, "Buy government bonds instead of expensive diamond rings." I was all full of that. [laughter] Some things I've lived to regret, and some things have been all right.

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\*Theory of the Leisure Class

Shearer: Backing up just a little bit to your father's political views that you mentioned earlier, how did they strike you and your friends? Were they an influence?

Cox: I don't know where he got these ideas, but he was a Socialist. I always called him, thought of him as a "parlor pink" because he--well, his hours. I keep harking back to that. His hours being as they were, he could rarely count on going to a public meeting of any kind. He subscribed to a few magazines that were of a liberal nature. Stitt Wilson was the man in Berkeley that was always running for mayor and never got anywhere. I really would have to check the dates to see whether this was before or after the days of Eugene V. Debs.

I had an uncle, my mother's brother-in-law, who had come up through the business world and had succeeded financially better than my family. Why these two men kept on arguing, I'll never know. By then (the '30s) the Berkeley family had a car--an automobile, I mean--and they used to come over and take my mother and father on picnics or even for overnight weekend jaunts. The two women would sit there while the two men argued, you know, capitalism versus socialism; and why they just didn't agree to disagree, I have no idea. Why the two women didn't step in and insist that they agree to disagree--because you could always be sure how the arguments would go--and my uncle was very, very conservative.

I remember in the shipbuilding days when, by now, the so-called lower classes were working in the shipyards. By now I'm talking about the 1920s. The Bethlehem shipbuilding firm had a great, big establishment here in Alameda. These people from wherever they were coming were now beginning to wear silk shirts and able to rise up into the middle class. My uncle frowned on that! People didn't know their place if they aspired to silk shirts.

I said I didn't have any boyfriends. Well, I must have had a few along the way, because I can remember my father entertaining them--these would be the nights he wasn't on the night run [laughter]--when he'd launch off about capitalism and early sea-faring days.

Now, to what extent that may have influenced my liberal outlook on life, I don't know, but I consider myself a liberal as far as my sympathy for the "underdog" goes. But I first registered to vote as a Republican and have never changed it. This limits my options in primary elections. In the early days in Alameda, there were practically no Democrats in the community. Many of the families migrating here during the war years were Democrats.

Shearer: Did he recommend Veblen to you?

Cox: No, no. That was the university. [pauses] Beatrice and Sydney Webb wrote Prevention of Destitution. Those were all more or less required reading or suggested reading when I was in school.

Shearer: Did you ever talk with your father about these things?

Cox: I don't recall that I did. It was possible I did, but I suppose by then I would have been sympathetic, not necessarily to his attacks on capitalism, but I would have been sympathetic to the poor, pulling themselves by their own bootstraps or by being given a little assist on the way. I was certainly at this point sympathetic to people who hadn't had the opportunities, for instance, that I had had.

Shearer: Did you know anybody who was poor?

Cox: No, I don't think so, not really poor.

Shearer: Your mother didn't have any household help?

Cox: Yes. When my brother and I were quite small, she had a washerwoman who came in once a week, but we never had household help like a maid or a cook.

In fact, that was one of the problems when I went to Manila. In Manila a white woman lost caste if she did her own work. There was one man who was sort of a contemporary of my husband and who had a wife and children when he went to Manila under the same circumstances. Their children went to the public schools, and they could not afford help. From a caste standpoint, this was the way things went in Manila: if you were a white woman, you didn't work; that is to say, housework.

I remember, as we approached Manila that first day, I was practically in tears because I didn't know what was facing me as a housewife. And how was I going to manage? I didn't know about servants and all the rest. Well, then it turned out that I lived in a hotel for a while, and then we did move into a house. The other couple who moved with us and shared the house was older, and she had had experience as a housewife. In fact, she had had experience with servants, so she took over the management of our one cook and houseboy, Mariano Estacio. Then, later, when they were gone to Japan and I was the senior woman in the house, I was familiar enough with it.

Then, of course, in my married days in this country, aside from babysitters or a cleaning woman, we never had day-by-day help and certainly no live-in help.

A Typical Day at the University

Shearer: When you started college, what was a typical day for you? You decided to go, and you had to get onto the streetcar?

Cox: Yes. I either had to walk a couple of blocks and take the streetcar and change in Oakland, or I could catch a streetcar right at the corner near my house and then transfer within a couple of blocks or so and transfer again in Oakland. The trip took a good hour.

Then, at this point, my friend Mildred Adams and I bragged that we had never had an eight o'clock. One of our slogans was we'd gotten through college without an eight o'clock, which was different from my friend Zdenka because she was taking lab courses in an entirely different department and she frequently did have to have an eight o'clock class.

Well, we would get on the campus for a nine o'clock, say, and a ten o'clock, and then an eleven o'clock. Then we'd go to Hearst Hall usually for lunch. I remember taking logic at one o'clock, and that is not a good time to take logic. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] The sleepy time of the day.

Cox: Then a two o'clock or a three o'clock, or in the meantime if you didn't have a class you went to the library. I don't remember whether in those days we could get into the stacks ourselves, or whether there were just enough books around in the reading room. But later on, students weren't allowed into the stacks, and I don't remember at what point that happened.

Then by three or four o'clock we were leaving the campus again. It took an hour to get home, so that I was home by five-thirty, six, or seven.

Shearer: And where did you study?

Cox: Well, at home, either at the dining room table or in my own room.

Shearer: How many courses did you take, or how many units?

Cox: Well, whatever, sixteen, I guess. Wasn't it fifteen or sixteen units a semester?

Shearer: Did you have some advice on what to take when you started in, or did you kind of suit yourself?

Cox: Well, I guess by now I must have decided on economics, you see. Everybody had to take History 1A, and everybody had to take certain English courses, and then you had to take Economics 1A. From then on, you just sort of built up; you knew what the requirements were in the department in which you were. Then there was a chemistry class for College of Letters and Science people to qualify then for the science requirement. I believe the instructor was Professor Joel Hildebrand. When the Big Game time came, he always had a big pharmacist's kind of a jar on the desk that had white and red liquid in it, and he poured something in it, and it turned blue and gold. [laughter] This called for an ovation.

Shearer: [laughter] That was the Big Game between Stanford University and the University of California?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Were there a lot of athletes taking this class?

Cox: I don't recall. Probably not, because this was for the College of Letters and Science people, and unless the football people were letters and science people, they wouldn't have been in the class.

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Cox: I remember that up in Bacon.

Shearer: Bacon Hall?

Cox: Yes. They were talking about dinosaurs. That was all new in those days. What was called cultural lag--it took a long time for scientific information to filter down to the general public. The Pleistocene, the Pleiocene, the Miocene, and all that business that everybody knows about now was--

Shearer: That must have been just thrilling.

Cox: It was. It really was. They had slides, you know.

Shearer: You mean that they'd show slides on a screen, pictures of the animals?

Cox: Yes, of the dinosaurs and of primitive rushes and vegetation.

Memorable Teachers: Kroeber, Cross, Peixotto, and Stebbins

Shearer: Who were the professors that made a difference to you in certain--?

Cox: I'm sorry I don't remember the geology man. Maybe I could figure that out, or would that have been Dr. Wallace Merriam, who later went to the Smithsonian?

Shearer: There was a professor Merriam I have listed.

Cox: [spells name] Then in anthropology there were Alfred Kroeber and Waterman.

Shearer: Did you take classes from Kroeber?

Cox: Yes. This was when Ishi was on the campus.

Shearer: Did you meet him or see him?

Cox: Well, I met him or heard about him or saw him or something, because this was the period of time when he was discovered, and Kroeber was his sponsor. By then he was at the Affiliated Colleges; what is now the University of San Francisco Medical School was called the Affiliated Colleges, and that was where the medical school was, and that was where Ishi finally went to live. Whether I ever saw him or not, I don't remember for sure. But at any rate, there was a lot of excitement around about Ishi in those days. That was about 1915 or '16 or thereabouts.

Shearer: Yes. It's not mentioned in the 1917 book, although maybe it wouldn't have been.

Cox: Well, those dates we could [look up] because, of course, later, Mrs. Kroeber wrote the book, and then there was the children's edition that was written for children about Ishi. For some reason or other which I don't understand, that story has caught the imagination of my oldest son. I've heard him tell the story a half a dozen times to his children or even his grandchild, and he chokes up and almost weeps every time, and so his wife and I try to keep him off the subject! [laughter] For some reason that Ishi story has gripped him, and even to this day when he talks about it he chokes up. He has the book and his son was given the child's book on Ishi. It's truly an emotional or mental thing with him; he didn't experience it himself.

Shearer: It's a very powerful, stark dilemma to the last of your race.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: The last one left. How lonely that must be!

Cox: Yes. And all the sad stories about the white settlers deliberately willing to exterminate--it's a very touching story.

Shearer: You may have been more effective than you realize in talking to him about it.

Cox: That may be.

Then Ira Cross was in the conventional economics courses, Economics 1A and so on; and Carleton Parker; and then the women.

Shearer: Excuse me. Ira Cross. There was also a Jessica Cross, wasn't there?

Cox: No. Jessica Peixotto. [spells name] She was of the San Francisco Peixottos. Peixotto is a well-known name in San Francisco, in organizing the Boys' Club or in social work or whatever. I'm not sure of their background, but at any rate they were a well-known San Francisco do-good family. Where they got their money, I don't know.

Shearer: She was a teacher at the university?

Cox: Yes. In economics.

Shearer: Was she somebody extraordinarily good?

Cox: Well, we all thought she was wonderful, and I guess she was. She was a "Miss" and a brilliant woman. Again, it was a new field; social work was a new field. There again, it was the Webbs, and Veblen, and all that sort of thing, you see, which I ate up.

Shearer: She must have drawn on her own experiences.

Cox: Perhaps. I don't remember about that.

Shearer: But she struck you as a very effective lecturer?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Was she open to students outside of the classroom as well?

Cox: Well, I suppose. I don't remember ever going to her office. I imagine that they all had office hours, but I don't recall ever having that contact, aside from the fact that the classes were not very large and we had a reasonable amount of contact there. Of course, Henry Morse Stephens' was the history class with a huge number. Then there was another class for women on physiology and

Cox: so on, and I'm sorry I can't remember--maybe if I looked in the Blue and Gold. I can't remember the name of the woman--she was a physician--who had that class.

Shearer: But Peixotto was teaching economics?

Cox: Economics, yes.

Miss Lucy Stebbins, I think, taught a class or two.

Shearer: She was a beautiful woman, wasn't she?

Cox: Yes, very statueque, very tall, and had a commanding presence.

Shearer: She was dean also.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: So she must have had some contact with women students.

Cox: And it amazed me, one time some years later--and I forget what kind of an affair this was--there was some sort of an affair on the campus, to which I went. I spoke to her, she was in the receiving line, and I must have laughed, I guess. She said she would always remember my laugh. This was an amazing thing to me because I wouldn't have thought it was distinctive [laughter]; or whether I laughed an awful lot or what, I don't know. But I went in there; she recognized me because of--

Shearer: From having heard you in class or something?

Cox: I suppose, in class.

At that time, it was the custom to assign an incoming freshman woman to a senior woman, who was known as a senior advisor. The advisor was supposed to be available if the freshman had any difficulties, or to extend any courtesies which the senior wished to. I remember that I kept track of my senior advisor after she graduated, for several years. When I was asked to be a senior advisor, my parents were pleased and as a surprise for me, they had a telephone installed at home. This was in the summer of 1916. In her later years, the telephone was a great pleasure to my mother. She and her sister in Berkeley held long conversations several times a week, or daily if there were problems of any kind at either end of the line.

There was a women's clubhouse on the campus. There was the Men's Hall, which was a log cabin, and a little farther up the canyon there was a smallish building that was for senior women, the Senior Women's Hall. We went there sometimes for relaxation or committee meetings.

- Cox: Then it was traditional that each year, when the seniors were about to leave, there was a little ceremony. They turned the building over to the juniors who were now going to be seniors. I never knew why I was asked to give that dedication speech. Because, I suppose, of commuting and so on, and the fact that my funds were limited, I never took part in school activities on the campus the way I had in high school. I never knew why I was asked to give this speech that evening to turn the Senior Women's Hall over to the new women. But I, of course, agreed to do it, and I assume it went well. But I never knew why I was asked.
- Shearer: Who asked you?
- Cox: I don't remember now. I was not prominent, I was not a sorority person, and I did not take part in student activities on the campus.
- Shearer: Not at all? I thought you were in the YWCA.
- Cox: Well, aside from the YWCA when I was a freshman--but not as far as student body offices were concerned or any of that.
- Shearer: Why was this? Just no time, or did you feel--?
- Cox: I think part of it was no time--I was commuting--and there again the fraternity-sorority influence was very strong. Most everybody that got anywhere in student activities had some sort of a backing. I don't recall that I resented that in any way. I was very thrilled with the university. I still get shivers up and down when they sing "All Hail." [laughter] I loved the rallies. I got a tremendous thrill out of all of that, just being part of a big institution in which I had a great deal of pride. So, I don't recall any feelings of being left out or wishing I could do more. I was perfectly contented with my college life and enjoyed it very, very much.

### The Rewards of a College Education

- Cox: All through my life it has been a real source of satisfaction, pride, whatever, that I have my degree, because in those days there were not so many women with degrees. In Alameda then later, when I became active in local PTA and all, for a long time I was the only one in the group that had a degree. But when I went on to the State Board of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, many or most of the women were college women, and I found that a very satisfying experience, and also that I was on a par then with others. So, it's always been a source of satisfaction to me that I have my degree.

Shearer: How big was your senior class on the campus?

Cox: Well, I'll look that up; we could count the pictures. Well, the whole student body wasn't more than five thousand or something or other, so there wouldn't have been more than--what?--a thousand or eleven hundred.

Shearer: Probably a thousand in a class.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: The rest would be graduate students. So, that's quite small.

Cox: I mentioned earlier that my husband was not a college man. He had graduated from high school. At one time, he had wondered whether he would go to Berkeley in the chemistry department. By then he was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old, and he was not encouraged by the chemistry department because of his age. Anyway, by then he was working and able to support me, you see, whereas, again, if he'd gone through four years of college, it would have been another four years [to wait]. Later, of course, older students on the campus became commonplace.

But later, I wondered--I had my degree, all three of our children went to Berkeley, and he was the--I never knew for sure, but I had some feeling that he was a little sensitive to the fact that he was the odd man out. All the rest of us had our degrees. I'm not sure.

Also, the fact that he was not very tall, and all his life it had been a burden to him that he was not very big. I think I mentioned earlier that Will was about five feet four inches tall. He told me once that his height had prevented him from gaining much of what he had wanted in life (as in athletics) and at one time he had thought it was going to mean not winning me. In the beginning I was conscious of his height and wore low-heeled shoes and so on. But later I was not conscious of it at all.

When he belonged later to the Kiwanis Club and so on, there was a little stool they made for him; they used to tell him to stand on the stool. There was a lot of joking about his being small. He wore a vest in those days. He used to measure the boys up on his vest as they kept growing. Eventually, they all got taller than he was. While he was, I'm sure, proud that they weren't going to have the problems he had as a short man, it wasn't too easy, either, to sit around and again be the shrimp. [soft laughter]

Cox: So, perhaps he had more problems than he ever--we never talked about any of that, and maybe we weren't as aware of it or as sympathetic to it as we might have been had we been more aware. I don't know. But I thought sometimes as the years went on that he had a good many problems: in the first place, being smaller as his boys grew up; and then all the rest of us had college degrees and he didn't.

Shearer: Was he a reader? Did he enjoy reading?

Cox: Yes. Well, in fact, in his high school days--there was a long period of time when I thought he was better educated in some ways than I, because he could quote English literature and all more than I seemed to remember.

But then we always had magazines around. I don't remember that we bought many books, but there were always the National Geographic and the Saturday Evening Post and the Literary Digest. It was always a family where there were magazines around and then where the children's books were around and all.

Shearer: Did you have a sense that you were intellectually equal and that your intellectual interests were compatible?

Cox: As far as my husband was concerned ?

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: I think I mentioned that while I was on the campus, intelligence tests came in. I always thought it would be interesting to know my IQ--whether it would have been possible or not, I don't know; I never followed through on it.

But the only thing I could assume was that I did very well in high school, I did reasonably well at the university, and I could assume that my intelligence was such-and-such, or I wouldn't have been able to perform.

Then, later, I always thought that my husband would be equally intelligent if he put his mind to it, or if he was interested in the same type of thing. I never had any feeling that he was my inferior as far as intelligence was concerned. Whether he was or not, I really don't know.

Shearer: But your attention was turned to different areas?

Cox: Yes, yes.

Mothers' Pension Program: A Precursor to Day Care

Shearer: I'm letting us get a little bit beyond college. I'd like to go back, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, and ask you about Carleton Parker. He was the liberal economics professor.

Cox: Yes. He was a younger man; that is, younger than Ira Cross. I'm a little vague now, although this could be documented; he did some work with the hop pickers up here in northern California, Lake County, wherever it is. Now, whether that was organizing, trying to organize them in labor unions, or--I'm a little vague, although I suppose that could all be documented if you wanted to. Then, when he died as a comparatively young man, there was some thought he'd burned himself out in all of this extracurricular work that he had done. But he had classes on the campus, and I had classes with him.

Shearer: Did he inspire you in his descriptions of the--?

Cox: Well, I suppose I would have been very empathetic, would have had empathy with him because of his interest in the downtrodden [laughter] more than I would have [with], say, Cross, who was lecturing on economics, the theoretical nature. I have Parker's The Casual Laborer and Other Essays (1920) and An American Idyll, by his widow Cornelia Stratton Parker (1919). The latter was given to me by Mildred Adams.

Shearer: Did you ever have any contact with him outside of the classroom?

Cox: I don't recall that. I don't recall having any contact with any of the professors outside of class, since we would have known by the catalogue and all what courses we were supposed to take next, unless there would have been some problem. Mildred and I must have met with some of them to get the field work organized and report back, but I don't recall that. She lived in New York for many years. We kept in touch occasionally.

Shearer: This is Mildred--?

Cox: Mildred Adams. She married W. Houston Kenyon, Jr. She married later in life than I did. She never had any children. She died in 1980. Mildred and her husband traveled extensively. She wrote many articles and several books. I have two: The Right To Be People (1967) and Garcia Lorca (1977).

Shearer: She did field work with you on the Mothers' Pension Act.

Cox: On Mothers' Pensions, yes.

Shearer: Maybe now would be a good time to mention that, since that was a university experience, and it might lead into some of the other--

Cox: The difference in philosophy?

Shearer: Yes. In social work.

Cox: This would have to be checked. I would say that Mothers' Pensions was a California program, not a national one, but it was a so-called widow's or mother's pension. It was designed to allow women who were widows to remain at home in order to take care of their children; that was the philosophy in those days.

Shearer: And this was about 1916?

Cox: This would have been by 1917. Yes, 1915 on.

Then the next time I became aware of this type of thing was in the '40s. By then there were what were called child-care centers, under the auspices of the WPA. There were two in Alameda and some in Oakland. The two in Alameda were under the direction of the Oakland program. The purpose of the program at that time was to put unemployed teachers to work.

Shearer: So, the centers were funded, and teachers were paid to take care of the children.

Cox: Yes. The basic purpose was to give employment to the teachers.

Shearer: I see. And the first time around, it was to pay the mothers to stay home with the children.

Cox: To stay home, yes. That was a state-supported thing, and I suppose there must have been applications and some administration of it and eligibility requirements and all that. Perhaps it was that type of thing that we hoped to get into when we graduated. I'm a little vague about that. You know, my memory only holds out so long! [laughter]

But now we're talking about the WPA that had these children's centers.

Then came the Second World War and the need for everybody to go to work. There were federal funds available under the Lanham Act, and the local school district was to be the agency that assumed the administrative responsibilities. So, the WPA centers were phased out, and we took over the two that had been established in Alameda under WPA days. Then, as the housing projects in Alameda were built by the federal government to provide housing

Cox: for people who had been encouraged to come for war work, each public housing area built a child-care center. So, as these housing projects came--what is the word now that they use?--on the line [chuckles], then we would open a new center. So, there were the two that had originally been the WPA, and then as these others--buildings--were presented to us, we would open up a center.

There were very few people in those days who knew anything about child-care centers or preschool education or any of that. The superintendent of schools in Alameda asked me if I would undertake to be the administrator. Well, I didn't know which end was up with the child-care centers, so we just started in. Dr. Mary Woods Bennett, who was retired from Mills [College]--and who was the other woman, now dead, from Mills?--were experts in preschool education. Oh yes--Dr. Lovisa Wagoner. We had a terrible time getting teachers. Perhaps there would be a woman that followed her husband out to the San Francisco area, who maybe had a teaching credential in some other state, but was not eligible to teach here. We took almost anybody we could get, you see, then developed in-service training.

Shearer: Now, the point of these centers, again, was one step further.

Cox: That's right. It was to free women to go into war work and to have their children taken care of.

Shearer: I see. And the first phase of this was to--

Cox: This was a complete reversal of the first, where the Mothers' Pensions would allow women to stay home.

Shearer: Isn't that amazing.

Cox: Then, when we started all this, there was a lot of opposition. Some people said that children were better off at home, and kindergarten teachers objected because the children's centers were doing so much in the way of kindergarten stuff that there was nothing left for the kids when they went to kindergarten. There was all kinds of, really, opposition. There were people who saw this as a--and this, of course, the child-center people resented very deeply--that it was a babysitting thing, where we considered it an educational program. There was a lot of community misunderstanding.

Nowadays, with all the co-ops and so on, there's really an acceptance on the--well, maybe not on the part of everybody, but on the part of a good many people, that some type of preschool experience is good for children.

Shearer: And this was all aimed at children younger than kindergarten age?

Cox: Yes. They took them at, well, age two or something or other. They had to be toilet trained. There was no infant care. As I recall, it was two years old or older.

### Field Work Criticism Has Political Repercussions

Shearer: Placing this back in the context of your college experience, when you were doing the survey work, the field work on the administration of Mothers' Pension Program, with Mildred, isn't this the occasion in which you had to go into the county and--?

Cox: Well, yes. In Alameda County and in the Mission District in San Francisco, I've often thought how rather presumptuous it was for two young women to be asking questions of established housewives. But I do not recall that they objected to answering. I was a candidate for honors. It was not--I never got a Phi Beta Kappa. One of the stories was that people in economics very rarely got Phi Beta Kappa keys. [laughter]

Shearer: Why? Because it was so hard?

Cox: Well, for one thing, it was supposed to be harder. For another thing, there were faculty members in the English department and so on who pushed people along or encouraged that sort of thing. There was one Alameda gal that got it whom I didn't think, you know, was so hot. [laughter] But she was a very good English student, and the English department kind of pushed her along. At any rate, it was more rare for a woman in the economics department to make Phi Beta Kappa.

But there was one thing you could do, and that was to become a candidate for honors. I guess you announced yourself as that. There were a number of requirements, course requirements and all, including a course in statistics. Then you had to write this paper, and it had to be typed and all. Mildred did the typing. It was one of these things [in which] you had to have footnotes and the whole bit, Ibid., and all the rest. [laughter]

Shearer: Yes. [laughter]

Cox: And I don't remember now whether Mildred ever made it or not, but the two of us were candidates. Well, we didn't find out in advance, and when we went to get our diplomas--

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Shearer: So, you went to the--

Cox: So, I went to commencement not knowing whether I had been granted the honors or not. How I found out then that I had not, I'm not too sure, whether it would have been on my diploma, my degree, or whether it would have been a separate piece of paper. Anyway, it was a very great disappointment to me. This was perhaps one of the first times that I had tried for anything of that type of thing that I hadn't succeeded in getting.

I remember coming home and phoning to Dr. [Lucy] Stebbins to be sure that it wasn't an error or to find out why. She said something to the effect that some of the negatives things I had said about the administration of the Mothers' Pension Program in Alameda County, which was the administrative body, were of such a negative nature, I might have known that it wouldn't have gotten by, or something.

This was one of the first times that--. I really was shocked that my university [laughter] could be so influenced by a political consideration, that what a student had honestly done would have been refused because of fears of funding. I had said the records were practically inaccessible, were very dusty, etc. Anyway, I did not receive honors. I think I still have the paper around somewhere. My mother kept it for a good many years. [chuckles] My mother had what was called a box couch. Do you know what a box couch is?

Shearer: I'm not sure I do.

Cox: Well, it's a couch that opens up and the whole bottom part is a storage area, and she kept all kinds of things. This was not a thing that she used for day-by-day storage, you see. This was just antiques or keepsakes. [laughter] When she died, we went through there; I found quite a bit of stuff that she'd been hanging onto for a good many years. [laughter]

Shearer: It's both wonderful and awful to have that capacity. [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] Yes. It was six feet long and this [gestures] wide, and it was not a day-by-day use thing.

No, that was a big blow to me that--well, that shows how naïve I was [chuckles], so that I shouldn't have been upset.

Shearer: You said this was the first time you had been disillusioned. Does that mean that there were subsequent shocks?

Cox: Yes. I thought about one of those this morning, and I've forgotten it now. I'll try to think of it and tell you later.

Shearer: All right.

Spared from Two World Wars

Shearer: How did the war work filter into the campus consciousness? I understand there was an organization called the National Service Committee. Was that known to you?

Cox: Well, you see, when I was on the campus, this was, to begin with, before the United States entered into the war. Now, we have to check those dates. The war was over in 1918, wasn't it? The United States didn't go in till 1917.

Shearer: That's right.

Cox: Well, one of the--scarcely a boyfriend; he was the brother of an aunt of mine by marriage, and so we'd been thrown together by attending family affairs. He volunteered in the Ambulance Corps. As I remember, perhaps there would have been contributions on the campus to buy an ambulance.

But it was after I was married that the war--and by then, you see, we were insulated from it because my husband was already an employee of the federal government, so he was not involved in the draft or any of that, and we by this time were in Manila. So, we did not have much war experience in the First World War. My brother was too young.

Later on, there would always be maybe some embarrassment, you know: What did your father do in the war? And that sort of thing. Then some of the boys, for instance, that I had known in high school had been in the war, and some of them had survived, and some of them had been killed. But nothing personally came home to me.

Then, when my own children came along, and this was the Second World War, my oldest child had a deferment to graduate on one of the deferment programs, and then he went into the navy as a second lieutenant, but he never was sent out of the country. He was in South Carolina, later in Long Beach, but never was sent overseas. The youngest child was too young. Paul was at that time on the campus and he was 4F. So, I have never had any direct contact with losses, for instance, or family experiences in any of the wars.

Shearer: That's fortunate.

College as Preparation for Life

Shearer: Is there anything further you would like to say about the college years to wind up, things that you think of as important?

Cox: Well, I've already said it was a tremendous thrill, and I haven't gotten over it even to this day! [laughter] I get goosebumps even thinking about--I can't leave a football game until they've sung "All Hail," you know; that's sacrilegious. [chuckles]

Shearer: Do you think it prepared you for the kind of life that you led afterwards?

Cox: Yes, considering the fact that perhaps the courses I took, since I did not really go into professional social work, were, as I later thought of it, of more value to me as a married woman and a mother. That is, the kind of elective classes I took, like anthropology and psychology and all, hardly led toward any kind of a professional life in those fields. The fact that I knew that I was going to be married relieved me of a great deal of pressure of having to do things that would be commercially valuable later. But they benefited me, I thought, as a general citizen of the community--I was going to say "of the world"; I guess that's going a little too far. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] I don't know; how many have been to China, after all.

Cox: I consider the background I had, when particularly my children more or less went into the sciences, and I knew what strata were [laughter] and a miner's pick, you know, and that sort of thing--that in a general way, it was an excellent general education.

It certainly led into all the parent education work I did and so on. I had had a little bit of grounding in psychology and anthropology before that, you see, and you remember these phrases. What is it? [pauses to reflect] Ontogeny [recapitulates] phylogeny, the theory [that] the human embryo goes through all the stages that the race has gone through.

Shearer: Ontogeny repeats phylogeny.

Cox: Yes. Or phylogeny repeats ontogeny. [laughter] That's one of the things I remember, but apparently don't remember very well. That type of thing, you see, I'd had some awareness of it, so that I was able to understand or appreciate the modern theories.

Cox: What I have referred to as the cultural lag--the fifteen or twenty years it took for what professional people knew to drift down to the ordinary person--has been telescoped now with television and all the rest, so that what I studied in college, the children in grammar school know now, about various ages of man and eras and eons and all that.

Shearer: But that early generation of college graduates, though, must have felt like pioneers.

Cox: There was some of that, yes, and I felt a great satisfaction that it made me able to--well, it was a long time before it came to the place where I was no longer able to help the boys at school, and even then I was able, in a Socratic way, to ask them questions which might lead them into thinking the thing through when they'd gone beyond me as far as mathematics or whatever. I never took calculus, for instance. [chuckles] But I was able, in a Socratic way, to ask questions which perhaps allowed them to go ahead with their thinking. Good old one o'clock logic.

Shearer: Well, I guess that's essential. To be able to ask the right question.

Cox: Yes. It's always been a great satisfaction to me that I have the degree. My children are proud of it now too, you know. My grandchildren even brag about having a grandmother--[laughter] Well, there aren't too many people that have grandmothers of my age who have a college degree.

Shearer: That's right. And in a tough subject too.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Thank you very much. It's wonderful to talk with you.

## IV MARRIAGE

Courting at the Methodist Church##

Shearer: Did you go out with groups of girls, or was it a group of boys and girls?

Cox: No. As I recall now--by now I'm talking about high school senior or even Berkeley freshman--there were four or five of us from Alameda, and none of us at that point had boyfriends, so that we traveled around together a great deal. We sometimes stayed over after classes if there were going to be affairs at the university. By now, when I was keeping company with Will, he was proposing to me every hour on the hour. He had a car, and we'd either stay over for some of these affairs and he'd pick us up later--

Shearer: Where would you stay?

Cox: On the campus. No, no. I mean, just stay over after classes.

Shearer: Oh, not stay all night?

Cox: No, no. We'd perhaps go down Center Street somewhere and have something to eat, go to whatever it was, a meeting, and then he'd pick us up; or otherwise he would take us and then hang around. So, he was one boy with me and three or four of my girlfriends. None of my friends were particularly boystruck or were going with boys, so that the fact that we were all on a par that way, not having any romantic interests--

Shearer: Except that you were being courted very assiduously by Will.

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: You had met in the Methodist--

Cox: Well, yes. He played basketball. He was really too small to play basketball. He played baseball with a local team, he played basketball some, and it was in that connection that I first became aware of him. He says that he went to my commencement. The high school at that time had no auditorium, so that, for instance, the commencement exercises were held at this time in the Methodist church, which is just across the street from the school. He told me later that he had been there that night when I was the valedictorian, although I really didn't know him at that point. It was shortly after that he made himself more obvious. [laughter] I'll have to admit, the fact that I was the only one of my friends who had a boyfriend with a car--I always taunted him a little that it was the car that was the attraction. [laughter]

Shearer: Were you smitten right away?

Cox: No. In fact, the night he proposed to me, I said he'd spoiled it all. [chuckles] I thought we were going along at a kind of a leisurely pace, you know. It was handy to have a chauffeur and a car. I wasn't particularly prepared to go beyond that.

Shearer: How old was he then?

Cox: He was older than I. His birthday was in October, so he was either six or seven years older than I, depending--

Shearer: The time of the year--

Cox: My birthday being in March and his in October. He was already working, you see, and established and out of school and all. So, all of these things he was doing, like the baseball game and all, were purely extracurricular. He was already working.

Shearer: Was he at that time making \$125 a month?

Cox: Yes. Overseas pay was \$150. The army--both officers and civilians--always got more money for overseas. But by the time we came back here and settled down, it was \$125. If you got a raise, it would probably be \$25 a year; a couple of dollars a month would be the raise.

Then, later on, when he was working for the Alameda School Department, he was always out trying to get raises for the business staff, the secretaries and all. Whether he thought that if they were giving them to the secretaries, they'd give one to him--I don't know. But it always annoyed me a little that he was always trying to get raises for other people [laughter], and I thought we could stand one ourselves! [laughter]





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## PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Dunbar School. A one-room school outside Glen Ellen. Back row: Miss Davidson (teacher), Adeline Toye, girl, Harold Weise (who later married the teacher). Front row: fifth from left, Wilber Toye. About 1908.
2. William Cox, Manila, 1916.
3. Adeline Toye, 1917.
4. Family Christmas Card, 1932. From left: William, Bill, Paul, Adeline, and David.

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, dear! You'd have liked a little more private attention, instead of all this public-spirited effort.

Cox: Yes! Whether he really thought that if these people who were his subordinates got the raise, he'd get one, too--I don't know--but so far as I know, he really never pushed for one for himself.

### Husband's Background##

Shearer: You were married as a senior in college?

Cox: Well, I graduated in May, and we were married in December.

Shearer: I see. Of 1917?

Cox: Yes. My husband had already--he came west, having passed a civil service examination. In those days, there was what's known as the Quartermaster Corps. He came to San Francisco in December, we'll say, of 1910.

He had left northern Michigan, where he'd graduated from high school and then had worked in the mines. His father was a hard-rock miner from Cornwall. My husband never worked underground. About 1909, he had gone to Duluth, [Minnesota], by himself, rented a typewriter, and taken a civil service examination. He went back to Michigan and sometime later got a telegram asking if he would accept a position in San Francisco. He said yes, so he came to San Francisco and worked at Fort Mason in San Francisco, or the old Ghirardelli chocolate place also where the Quartermaster Corps rented office space.

There he met a man who was older than he and helped him find a boarding place and took him under his wing and all, and we were friends for a long, long time. After a period of time, they came to this side of the Bay, looking for a place to find a house to buy, and they did find a place here in Alameda, and my husband brought his mother and father. He was an only child. He brought his mother and father out from Michigan. That was when we met, you see, [in Alameda].

Shearer: Did he build a house too?

Cox: They bought a house, 2207 Clinton. The house is still there, of course.

Shearer: Did you then live in that house after you were married?

Cox: No, no. I was still living at home, you see, and we're talking now about 1912 and so on, before I had graduated from high school.

Shearer: Right. But, I mean, that was not the house that you lived in after you were married? His parents continued to live there?

Cox: No. His mother died before my husband and I were even engaged; we had met, but we were not going together. I really never knew his mother. I'm not even sure whether I met her. At any rate, she died. So, it was my husband and his older friend and my husband's father; the three of them were keeping house together.

By then, it was 1915, and it was the custom then for civilians in the Quartermaster Corps to accept a tour of foreign duty, just like army officers do. I think he had once been asked and he had turned it down, and then a second opportunity came up, and it really wasn't very good business to decline too often.

#### A Secret Engagement

Cox: So, he was to go to Manila, and by then we were secretly engaged.

Shearer: Why secretly?

Cox: Well, I was still in school. We were planning to be married. My parents, or my mother, I don't think, looked on this with any great favor. We just didn't see a long engagement; that is, announced. So, we became engaged in 1914.

So he, in May of 1915, went to Manila, and I had two final examinations that day in my major. [laughter] That was kind of a bad day!

There were two ways I could go to Berkeley on the streetcar. One way was to transfer at a place which was not too far from his house, so I went that way and saw him for a few minutes, went on to Berkeley, and took the final.

Shearer: Knowing that he was going to be sailing.

Cox: And he sailed at noon. [chuckles] And I took another final in the afternoon.

Shearer: But you knew that you would see him again; you had plans to be married?

Cox: Yes. Oh, yes. We'd been engaged by now a year, you see, in our own minds. I had not wanted a ring or any evidence of it.

Cox: There was some thought earlier that he would go to Cal, when he first came out here. He had only the high school education, and he was interested in chemistry. He went so far as to go to the university and talk to someone in the chemistry department. Then he was twenty-two years old. Whoever he talked to--I wouldn't know now--rather talked him out of it, said that he would be older than the average student. Anyway, he decided not to, and I have always understood that he was more or less talked out of it. He would have had to enter as a freshman--all he had was his high school diploma--and that would be an age span, an age difference. [chuckles] It doesn't make any difference nowadays, but apparently it did then.

At any rate, I was eager to graduate, and he was willing to accede to that, and so it was agreed that he would go to Manila and that I would stay home and go to school.

Then it turned out that when I graduated--by now it was May, and a friend of ours had been back and forth and had carried word from me and from him that he could come home on leave. So, I had from May to December just kind of puttering around, because you couldn't very well look for a position if you knew you were going to be marrying in a few months.

Shearer: By that time your parents had been told?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: I see. Did you tell them, or did you both tell them?

Cox: Well, I must have told them, because by then Will was gone, you see. [laughter] So we had a little party at the house, and I have somewhere, I think, a copy of what I passed around as an engagement announcement. I had a picture of the two of us leaning on a fence or something, and I cut those out, put them in little folders, and gave them out at a little tea party to some of my friends. That was my engagement announcement party. Well, I'll show you, if you'd like.

Shearer: I'd love to see it.

Cox: Come here. [goes to get engagement announcement; tape off briefly]

Aside on Apples and Onions and Other Cures##

[Interview 3: December 12, 1980]

Shearer: Before we get back into our outline, I'd like you to recount the story of the time you had scarlet fever. How old were you?

Cox: Well, I was in high school, maybe fifteen or sixteen years old. My family didn't ever call the doctor until home remedies were obviously not working, so by the time they called him this time I not only had scarlet fever, but I had Bright's disease; my kidneys had been affected.

Shearer: What is Bright's disease?

Cox: Well, it's a kidney ailment. I'm vague about the precise [nature of it]. It was somehow a result of the scarlet fever. My ankles were swelling and my wrists were swelling from the Bright's disease, and that was why my parents got anxious and called the doctor.

So, I was out of school and at home, in bed and around, for quite a long while and had to be on this diet. One of the problems was that it was a very mild diet and not very attractive. One day I could have boiled onions and one day I could have applesauce, and so the routine got to be whether it was apple day or onion day. Well, it fortunately didn't destroy my taste for apples, but I haven't been able to look an onion in the eye since! [laughter]

Shearer: Oh, dear! [laughter] So, it was a diet of apples and onions?

Cox: Well, I don't remember what the basis was. I suppose I had something other than apples and onions, but the main feature of the diet was one day apples and one day onions.

Shearer: And how were the onions presented to you? Raw?

Cox: Well, they were boiled or creamed or--I don't know--any way my mother could think of to make them palatable.

My friends, of course, were not allowed in and the house was quarantined and all that. So, some of my friends put a ladder up outside the bedroom window, and at this point we used to converse through the window. One of these friends finally came down with scarlet fever, but it was long enough after that they couldn't say she got it through the window from me. [chuckles]

Shearer: Who prescribed the strange diet? This was the doctor's idea or your mother's?

Cox: No, it was the doctor and he was a homeopathic doctor. Do you know what homeopathy is or was? [chuckles]

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: My parents had great faith in him and he was the family doctor for a long, long time.

Shearer: And you recovered, I trust.

Cox: [laughter] Yes. Of course, I lost a lot of school, but my teachers were quite good-natured about it, and I was able to catch up. I don't know how many weeks I was out--quite a period of time--but I made up the work without any problem. I maybe took a test or something, or maybe the teachers trusted me; I don't know. The Latin teacher gave me a summer assignment.

Shearer: But that was a serious childhood disease?

Cox: Well, then the question was whether my kidneys would be permanently affected and what would happen in childbearing years and all. I never have had any problem since. So, whether it was the onions and the apples [laughter] or homeopathic drugs or my own physique, who knows? But certainly I've never had any kidney problem.

Shearer: Did your parents always rely on the homeopathic approach?

Cox: Yes.

Also, at the time my mother was pregnant with me, there was a woman physician practicing in Alameda, whom my mother would have liked to consult, but who was out of town for an extended period of time. Whether this indicates that my mother was an early feminist, or only that she would have felt more comfortable with a woman, I do not know.

Shearer: I see.

And do you also consult a homeopath?

Cox: No. I did after I was married for a period of time consult this same physician, who is no longer living; as a girl when I got to be older I told my mother I thought he was a little too friendly. I got the impression he was touching me more than he needed to, so she made arrangements for me to consult another physician in town after that.

Shearer: And this other physician was not a homeopathic doctor?

Cox: No. I don't know that there were any others in town at that time, and certainly there aren't very many, I guess, in the country today. Homeopathy, I think, has sort of fallen by the--

Shearer: I understand there is some interest now. I have several friends who are consulting homeopathic doctors.

Cox: It always seemed a very sensible thing to me. I was rather surprised that the allopaths objected to it. The homeopaths used to prescribe--you didn't really have to buy the drugs; they gave you the drugs and you diluted them in water. Well, it was almost like the theory of vaccines; you gave stuff in very small doses [that elicited a counter reaction from the body].

I consulted him [the homeopath] as a grown woman at one time when I was troubled with asthma, which I am no longer troubled with, but at any rate--

Shearer: What did he recommend?

Cox: Well, he had a spray. He didn't go into the allergy business much. He had a power spray (I don't know whether it was iodine or just some brown substance) and he used to use this heavy spray.

Shearer: Into the bronchial passages?

Cox: Yes. And then he also gave medicine that was to be used in drops. Then sometimes later on--by then I was married, for the children were there--I used to call the medicine the sixty-minute medicine. Sometimes when I'd get a spell I'd just send one of the family over to get some of this. [laughter] I forget--it seems to me it took sixty minutes to work. Maybe it was [that] I was supposed to take it every sixty minutes. But it was this same sort of thing--that you put drops into water to dilute them.

Shearer: And did it actually cure the asthma?

Cox: No, that was cured in another way later on. [chuckles]

Shearer: How was that cured?

Cox: Well, by then I was, we'll say, thirty-five or forty years old and I still had asthma from time to time and, you know, I'd be laid up for a couple of days.

I think I have previously said that when I was teaching parent education classes, we had regular sessions once a week where we all got together. It was an in-service type of a training. Through this connection I met a woman at the university. Dr. Kohl, her name

Cox: was. [spells name] K-o-h-l, I think. It turned out that she was one of the very few or perhaps only woman in her class in medical school. As a result, all of the other interns had tossed the difficult cases or the kinds of cases that didn't follow prescribed routines and all to her, and she became interested in hay fever, asthma, and so on, and she agreed to accept me as a patient. (While she was still on the faculty of the university, she had some private patients.)

When I first went to see her, she said that I had as good or better an intellectual understanding of, we'll say, the psychological causes for asthma, which were beginning to be recognized about that time, but I hadn't emotionally accepted what I was saying intellectually. I went to see her for quite a while, and she discovered that my basal metabolism was low. I was hypothyroid and so I took thyroids for a long, long time. Then it got to the place where I would just increase the dose myself because I figured that that's what I needed.

For a time, I felt quite dependent on her but later I didn't see her anymore. I'm over the asthma anyway and I haven't had any for years. I remember (rather dramatic, to me) I'd have these spells. By then I had children up to adolescence. In fact, one of them almost liked to have me have an attack because I'd gotten a hypodermic from a local doctor and he'd shown my oldest son how to use the hypodermic. [laughter] To relax, you know--when you're in a spell of asthma, they can shoot you with something.

Shearer: What was it that was in the hypo?

Cox: Well, I think it was adrenalin; that's a standard remedy. My oldest son got so much fun out of the hypodermic, they were practically sitting around waiting for me to get another attack. [laughter]

But the minute I was able to toddle around, I again was supposed to be doing all the cooking and the housework and the traditional female chores. I remember very definitely, I was cooking chops or something or other that was a quick--you know, not a roast--and I was sitting on a chair because I really wasn't able yet to stand there, and I just thought to myself, "This is the last time I'm ever going to do this. With the family growing up, why should I drag myself out before I'm really well enough to assume these responsibilities which aren't necessary?" And I don't think I ever had asthma again.

Shearer: Interesting.

Cox: That's my story! [chuckles] It's quite possible that I have a bronchial weakness, because if I get a cold I hack away, but I haven't had any asthma for years. I have a definite remembrance of this deep inner feeling that now that they were no longer so dependent on me, it was ridiculous for me to punish myself by assuming responsibilities around here sooner than I really was able to.

Shearer: And so the result was that you didn't push yourself before you were ready after that time.

Cox: Yes, I decided to relax on my female responsibilities until my health was up to it. But I've never had a chance to try that out because I never had a bad dose again. [laughter] I gave myself a shot!

Shearer: [laughter] Mind over matter. [tape off briefly during rest of equipment]

### The Decision to Marry##

Cox: Well, by the time I had finished my freshman year--it was in the summer of 1914 [chuckles] and I remember definitely where we were and what my feeling was at the moment when I accepted Will's proposal and never changed my mind after that. From then on I knew that I was going to be married.

Shearer: What was your feeling? What was it that just made you [finally accept him]?

Cox: [pauses] Do you want to say "collapse"? [laughter] Surrender--##

Cox: I don't mean that I thought that I was the female versus the male as far as inferior or superior is concerned; I don't mean surrender that way. I guess I mean surrendered to love or to the forces of nature, and after that it never crossed my mind that he was not my intended and that I was [not] going to marry him.

He was perfectly willing that I should continue school. I think I said that, and I think I said that there was some thought that he would go into chemistry and [that he] decided against it.

Of course, at this point the idea was that we would be together a good deal. But then when it developed that he was going to Manila, there was still no thought that we would be married and I would go with him then. He was perfectly willing to have this separation so that I could graduate.

Cox: But all this time then I knew that I didn't need to be educating myself to earn a living, that I was going to be married. I told you why I went into economics, because my high school professor said the woods were full of history and English teachers. Then I took courses in anthropology. I took what few courses they had on the Philippines under Dr. David Barrows. I took a psychology course which turned out to be very helpful. I took a budget course wherein we decided that your husband would have to be earning \$150 a month before you could consider marrying him. [chuckles] And I married one who was only earning \$125.

But it was in those ways that I always felt, as a citizen in the community and as the mother of the family, my education had been broader, perhaps, or even kind of oddball, with the psychology and anthropology, which are not terribly good ways to earn a living. But I had been able to branch out and take these courses of civic or general interest which I perhaps would not have taken had I had to restrict myself to courses which would app'y to a career of some kind. In those days, a girl definitely chose between a career and marriage; there wasn't much, if any, thought of combining them.

Shearer: When we talked a little a few minutes ago about whether the issues of co-parenting and taking equal responsibility in marriage were formed notions early on, I meant, was it sort of in the abstract? These were not alive for you at that time?

Cox: No, no, not until I found myself in the situation. I'm not sure that they were, down to the present moment, at least in a spoken way. Wouldn't you say it was in the last five or ten years that people have been agreeing that the father has a definite responsibility as a family member in addition to earning a living? I don't mean to say that my husband abrogated his responsibilities. For instance, he was very active in the Boy Scout movement, and all three of our boys are Eagle Scouts. He was on camping committees, on work committees up at the Scout camp, and in activities in town. In fact, twice, I guess, he went on national jamborees leading groups of boys from around this area, so that [he contributed] in those almost we'll say--what?--extracurricular activities--

### The Wedding and Honeymoon##

Shearer: Well, it's interesting we've gotten into the child-raising because that's where I was really hoping we could cover today. Backing up a little bit, or actually several years from the birth of your first child--what is it? Three years and nine months? [chuckles]

Cox: Nine months and three years to the good. [chuckles]

Shearer: To your wedding day, and [I'd like to] ask if you could describe that.

Cox: Well, yes. I think I've said that we became engaged secretly because it was when I was, I guess, about in my freshman year at Berkeley. People might have assumed that we were very fond of each other. But, at any rate, it was in the summer of 1914 that I accepted about his twentieth proposal and didn't try to back out of it again as I had previously.

Shearer: Why did you back out of the earlier proposals? And what changed your mind the twentieth time?

Cox: You see, Will would propose to me sometimes when we were out together and I would accept. But overnight I would change my mind and worm out of the agreement the next time I saw him. I guess by the twentieth time, I had fallen in love.

Then, the following year, Will was working for the Quartermaster Corps, the United States Army, in San Francisco. They were supposed to take a foreign tour of duty just as the officers were. He was a civilian in the Quartermaster Corps, a position which is no longer in existence. So, the first time that there was an opening in Manila perhaps about 1913, and he was in line to go, he begged off. But the second time--you can't beg off continually--so in May of 1915, he left for Manila, and I had two examinations that day in my major subject. [chuckles]

So we were separated then from May 1915 until the fall of 1917. When Will was in Manila and I was in Berkeley, letters went by surface mail. We wrote diary-like letters and mailed them when the maritime news told of a steamer leaving. Will frequently interrupted writing, saying that the captain had sent for him. I thought it was fine that the captain relied so on Will, only to learn later that the call was for a game of poker.

By the summer of 1917--that was the year I was to graduate--a friend who was sort of an intermediary between us worked it or made suggestions; anyway, Will came home on leave. He got here in November. We were married in December, and we borrowed a car and went off on a honeymoon in an automobile on roads that were sometimes pretty bad. This was on the way to San Diego.

Shearer: Oh, you borrowed a car for your honeymoon?

Cox: Yes. The first night, Will had made arrangements for us to stay in San Jose. When he phoned to make reservations, the clerk asked him what kind of a bed he wanted [laughter], and he said, well, he was going to bring his wife with him, and so the clerk assumed from that it was to be a double bed.

We later had some trouble with the car. It was a friend's car. It had broken down a time or two, and he'd spent more money on repairs than he had anticipated, and so along the way we were getting short of money. We tried to get the hotel clerk to--I've just forgotten the details. But at any rate, the man said the last people who had taken him in looked as honest as we did, and so he wanted the car license number. [chuckles] Since the car wasn't ours, that was sort of ironic, too. [chuckles]

At any rate, we were married at home and it was on the ninth of December. A minister from the Methodist church, who was an older person (Dr. Elbert Dille) and very well known in the Methodist ministry, married us. Some of our Alameda friends [and] some of my college friends were there. It was a small home wedding.

Shearer: Was Zdenka Buben [there]?

Cox: Yes, she and Mildred Adams stood up with me.

Shearer: That means she was your matron or maid of honor?

Cox: Well, there were two of them who were bridesmaid. It was, you know, a small house and we couldn't really follow through this [custom] that the groom isn't supposed to see the bride until she shows up at the altar and that sort of thing. It was a very informal type of wedding. But I had a white wedding dress. Zdenka's brother was a violinist, and my brother played the flute, and my mother was a pianist, and that was the music for the occasion. We had a guest book and a wedding cake and whatever the refreshments were. I'm a little vague now because--it was all done at home; we didn't have any catering. So it was a very pleasant family home wedding.

Shearer: Did your mother play the piano for your procession? I mean, was there a procession? Did you march in?

Cox: No. I just appeared out of the back bedroom. [laughter] No. There was just music and the ceremony and the food, and relatives were there, my aunts and uncles and so on.

Shearer: Your two attendants were Mildred Adams and Zdenka Buben.

Cox: Yes, the two of them.

Cox: Zdenka was my closest friend in high school. I had not known Mildred so well, and she'd graduated six months earlier than we did. In those days, you graduated twice a year; there were six-month semesters in the school year. Mildred had graduated six months ahead of us and had gone to New York to live with relatives for a while. But then when she came back in the fall (this would be the fall of 1913 we all went to Berkeley, to Cal; Zdenka took a different course than Mildred and I did. So at that point, Mildred and I were really closer than I was with Zdenka because of hours. We didn't have eight o'clocks, for instance, and Zdenka did, and we were not in the same classes.

So they were equally my friends, one of them really closer in high school than the other, and the other one closer in college. Over the years since, I've seen more of Zdenka, though I keep in touch with Mildred. I have two of her books. She has had some success as an authoress.

Shearer: What kind of books does she write?

Cox: Well, the last one (I can show you the copy) is a biography of the Spanish poet [Federico Garcia] Lorca.

The earlier one was called A Right to Be People and it's a history of the women's rights movement. Her aunt Gertrude Brown of New York City was very active in the women's rights organization, and so this book is a rather history of the women's rights movement--Carrie Chapman Catt and all the rest of them.

Shearer: What part, if any, did Gladys McNutt play in your--?

Cox: Well, she is six months younger than myself. We were born in houses next door to each other; the houses are still standing on Encinal Avenue. We were very close then in elementary school. Her family had relatives on a farm in Illinois, and she had lost some time at school because of visiting back there, so that she was more than six months behind me in school.

By the time we were in high school, we usually went to school together since we lived in the same neighborhood, but I became more interested in student activities than she did, and I was usually having to stay after school for committee meetings or some other activity. So we went to school together more or less, but our classes were not the same because of age difference, and then in the afternoons we had other things to do.

I've often commented on it to her now that she believed "women's place was in the home," when I was wearing a "Votes for Women" button [laughter] because that was when California voted to give women the right to vote.

Shearer: In 1916?

Cox: In 1912.

Shearer: You're right, 1912.

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Shearer: What were Mildred Adams' views on women's suffrage when you were in high school and wearing your "Votes for Women" pin?

Cox: I don't really know. We weren't particularly close then. In high school she was six months ahead. She went to New York and came back in time to register at Berkeley. It was then that we became better acquainted.

One thing that influenced her was her aunt, who was closely aligned with the suffragist movement. But I think it was after graduating from Berkeley and going to New York to live with her aunt.

Then I graduated from high school before Gladys did and went to the university. She graduated and went to San Francisco Normal School, which then was a two-year course, so she was through school and teaching in Reedley, California, when I was married. She was not able to come to the wedding because there were no automobiles [laughter]; the train schedules were not right. We were married on a Sunday afternoon, and she couldn't make it to the wedding and then get back to school for Monday morning.

Then we came back from Manila and began to have the children. She was married but didn't have children. She went back to teaching, and our lives were different. I had the children; she did not. We didn't see each other too often. We kept track of each other because our mothers still lived next door to each other. In fact, she sometimes, I thought, made it a little difficult for me because she frequently or almost every day would drop by to see her mother on her way home from school. And I didn't see my mother that often. I was sometimes reminded [laughter] how filial Gladys was.

But it's only again within the last--what?--ten years that we have been such close companions; her mother died a little while before my mother died, her husband died before my husband died, and we belong to the same women's group in town. So in community activities we frequently paired off. We went to affairs together; we always sat together. We have taken some trips together, and people take us for sisters. Then a year or more ago she moved to San Jose, but she has not really divorced herself from local activities, so she drives up and then stays with me.

Shearer: Oh, that's nice. You know, I have her name down here a couple different ways: Gladys McNutt and Gladys Pennock.

Cox: Pennock is her maiden name. [spells Pennock]

Our lives were very similar in those early days. Our fathers both were railroad men, you see, and so we had the same kind of existence. All the neighborhood children played together, and in the birthday pictures we have of the neighborhood children having birthday parties, we were always there.

Shearer: Do you remember any special moment--I mean, of course, you must remember several--in the wedding, either something that you love to think about or a mishap or something?

Cox: [pauses] Well, no, aside from the fact that when we got to San Jose--oh, we stopped in Hayward for something to eat. In the restaurant I thought everybody was looking at my wedding ring! [laughter] I felt so conspicuous with the wedding ring on!

The pavement stopped about the time we got to Hayward, you know. Then we got to San Jose, and I don't remember going up to our room, but after we got to our room we phoned home. That was a big thing too, you know, to phone--that's practically long distance. So we phoned home, and they said that a congratulatory telegram had come for me after we left, and they wanted me to know about it. So my husband phoned down to the desk clerk and said, "If a telegram comes for Miss Toye, will you see that Mrs. Cox gets it?" [laughter] So, of course, the next morning all the staff at the hotel were lined up when we came down for breakfast. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, how funny! They knew you were newlyweds, just no question.

Cox: [laughter] They may have suspected it the night before, but they certainly knew it now!

Shearer: And what was this? A hotel in--?

Cox: In San Jose. The Vendome? Was that the old hotel that--? It may be still there, for all I know.

Shearer: It could be. As in Van Damm State Park?

Cox: No. [spells Vendome]

- Cox: Then a friend that I had met working summers lived in Turlock, and so we stayed one night with them, and we called on Gladys at Reedley on our way south. I don't remember, [but] we had dinner with her or something, I guess, because she was teaching in Reedley.
- Shearer: So you had a wedding trip of about--what?--a week, two weeks?
- Cox: Yes. We went as far as San Diego. That was really pioneering. [laughter]
- Shearer: [laughter] You said the pavement ended at Hayward?
- Cox: Well, one of the things to do when we were young people was to go down to Hayward evenings to have ice cream or something, and the pavement ended at about Hayward. I don't remember now what pavement there was between here and San Diego, but I do know that part of the time I stood up holding onto the windshield. We had the top down on the car.
- Shearer: Really?
- Cox: It was a Flanders, E.M. Flanders. So part of the time I remember standing up, holding onto the windshield, because I just couldn't stand to be bounced around so, the way the car was bouncing. The roads were so bad.
- Shearer: How many miles did you cover in a day?
- Cox: Oh, not too many. One place, Escondido or somewhere, we didn't have reservations. We got there after dark and had a terrible time rousing the landlord, and he finally came out in a long night-shirt [laughter] and found us a place. The bathroom/toilet facilities were out in the back somewhere; it was really rather primitive.
- Shearer: Was the kind of wedding and wedding trip that you had similar to what your friends and--?
- Cox: Well, I was really perhaps the first of this particular group of friends to be married and there were not so many automobiles then. I don't recall that any of my friends at this point had big church weddings or anything of that kind. We were mostly middle class people, who were married at home. In an ordinary home, for that type of an affair, you could accommodate twenty, thirty, forty people--relatives, close friends.
- Shearer: Did you arrange it so that an equal number of friends and relatives of your husband's family came? Was that part of the plans?

Cox: No. My husband was an only child.

He came to San Francisco and arrived at about Christmas time, 1910, to work at Fort Mason where the Quartermaster Corps offices were.

He met an older man (Robert Strayer) there, the man from whom we later borrowed the car. Bob was already working there and he took Will under his wing, helped him find a boarding place, and they were friends. Then, since my husband was an only child, he wanted to bring his mother and father out to California. So he and Bob spent some weekends touring the East Bay to try to find a suitable place, and they chose a house in Alameda. That was how we met, you see, because he established himself with Bob and his parents in this home that they bought in Alameda.

Then, before we became acquainted or at least before we became interested in each other, his mother died, so that I may have met his mother, but I'm really not sure; at least I never knew her.

So his father would have been at the wedding, but otherwise he didn't have--he had some relatives in Vallejo, and I don't remember that they came down. But his family having to have half the guest list and all that business [laughter] was not a problem.

Shearer: I see. So the wedding went smoothly and happily.

Cox: Yes, it was very nice, very pleasant.

He had been here since November, and I didn't have a ring or any of that when we were first engaged, so there was that kind of shopping to do. As I mentioned earlier, I was very aware, you know, of Veblen: "...ostentatious display and conspicuous leisure." So I insisted that I have a very modest diamond ring.

Shearer: Yes. The book by Veblen you're talking about now is The Instinct of Workmanship?

Cox: Yes. And they're really just now coming around to that. I mean to say, his thesis was that work should be made more interesting, that assembly-line work was demeaning. Well, how long has it taken them now to come around to that feeling? Now instead of improving conditions they're just putting in robots to do the mechanical work.

[shows ring] That's my engagement ring.

Shearer: Oh, yes. It's sweet. Where did you pick it out?

Cox: Shreve, Treat & Ecret in San Francisco.

Shearer: Did that become Shreve?

Cox: No, it was another firm, but I'm not sure whether it was the same Shreve or not. But Shreve, Treat & Ecret was a big jewelry [firm]. [spells name of firm] I suppose we'd have to look up in an old phone book to find it.

Then, some years later, when my husband became past master of his lodge, he received the customary emblem with a diamond. He had the stone replaced with a fake one, and he took the diamond and had this ring made for me as a surprise gift. So eventually I got a second diamond ring. [laughter] By that time I don't know that he remembered that I'd been so modest the first time around [laughter], but anyway it wound up I got two of them.

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## V LIFE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Cox: [Before I was married and went with my husband to the Philippines], I took all the courses that I could find at the university on the Philippines, you see. Barrows had written a book or whatever.

Shearer: That's right. [University of California] President [David] Barrows was interested in education of the Philippine people.

Cox: Well, he was assigned to be chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, and so he always used to joke and say that he was chief of the non-Christian tribes. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, for heaven's sake!

Cox: So, that increased my interest in Barrows, and also the fact that Nan [Barrows] and I were classmates, though we were not friends at all on the campus. But [afterward] I did invite them--Nan Barrows and I forget whom she was with, some traveling party or some, I suppose, official something or other. I happened to know she was in Manila and invited her to lunch, but that's the extent of it.

Shearer: Ella Barrows\* retells her adventures and life in Manila at some length in her oral history memoir, too. It would be interesting, I think, for you to read. It might refresh your recollections too of that time.

Cox: That would have been when they were living there then, wouldn't it?

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: Yes. That would have been prior to my time, you see.

Shearer: That's right. That was about 1900, and they made several trips back and forth.

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\*See Ella Barrows Hagar: Continuing Memoirs: Family, Community and University, published by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library.

Cox: That isn't Mrs. David Barrows, is it?

Shearer: No, it was Ella Barrows Hagar and she went with her father. She was quite young at the time, I think--twelve years old--and they would go off on horseback into the hinterlands.

Cox: Well, you see, Nan was my age. That put her at twenty-two or so at the time I'm talking about [1918], so that would have worked--the older sister.

Shearer: Yes. But her life and her recollections are chronicled in a most interesting fashion. What was striking to me is the number of interconnections between her and other people that this office has been interested in--and now here's another one.

Cox: Yes. Well, it was interesting. There was something in this morning's paper and I made a note of it in case we would want to mention it. Somebody in southern California is having trouble in the army because he has to wear a turban; his religion requires him to. Well, in the Philippines, in the early days, the army had a bad time with the Moros on the southern islands, who were still rebellious, and the Igorots and other native tribes in the north of Luzon, because the Moros insisted on wearing the turbans and the Igorots wore G strings.

Shearer: [laughter] And that's all?

Cox: So, they compromised. I used to have one around, but I don't know whether I can find it. The army invented some sort of a thing that would be a compromise between an army cap and the Moro turban, and they allowed the Igorots to wear the G strings with an army coat.  
[laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, dear!

Cox: So, the U.S. Army was not invincible! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, this is very interesting! I'm anxious to hear more about your time in the Philippines

##

#### Aboard the U.S. Army Transport Ship to Manila

Shearer: How long after you were married did you stay here before you went to Manila?

Cox: We were married on the ninth of December and we got back in time for Christmas, so we must have been gone ten days or two weeks. We left the following January, in 1918. My recollection is that the army transports (we went by transport\*) to Manila always left San Francisco on the fifth of the month, and they left Manila on the fifteenth for San Francisco.

People on the ship were no different in those days than they are now. The scuttlebutt always begins to get around: who's who, and who's sleeping with whom, and all that. Apparently for quite a while we were so circumpsect that people thought we were brother and sister [laughter] till someone discovered we were sharing the same stateroom.

On the transports there were not private baths with your stateroom; you had to go to the common bath. Mostly the bathing facilities used saltwater, and you have to use a special soap for that which isn't too good. But since my husband knew people in the Quartermaster Corps and, of course, was traveling under orders, the captain of the ship used to invite me to use his shower and bathroom because he had freshwater. [laughter] You'd have to sign up, you see, for the time when you would use the public bathroom; that is, for--

Shearer: The bathing.

Cox: Yes, your bath. There was a big black man who was the bathroom steward. Some people said that he was the model for the Cream of Wheat black man. He would come around and remind you when it was your turn to take your bath. [chuckles] The story was that some of the officers' wives would get so interested in their bridge games about this time that they wouldn't want to stop to go take their baths, and he had some comment about, "Well, if you don't come now, there are plenty of other women on here as dirty as you are!" [laughter] He was quite a character, this great big black man who was the bath steward.

Shearer: Isn't that something.

How long were you on the ship? Ten days?

Cox: Twenty-eight days. We stopped at Honolulu, which was my first experience there. We stopped at Guam. A girl I had known in college, Esther King--we were just seniors together; we weren't particularly friends, except we just knew each other. When we

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\*Either the USAT Thomas or the USAT Sheridan.

Cox: went over to board the transport, here was this woman on the dock and she was going to Guam to be married. When we got to Guam, the commanding officer's wife was very pleasant. I forget where they were married; whether in the chapel or at the commanding officer's home, I don't remember. But at any rate, the commanding officer's wife had decorated the place with tropical flowers, and that was the first time I'd seen these decorations with tropical flowers, including cadena d'amor. [spells name of flower] Cadena d'amor is the name of the flower; in English it's "chain of love." So, aside from the bridegroom, I was the only person at the wedding that the bride had ever known or seen before, and we were just, you know, casually acquainted--

Shearer: And accidentally present?

Cox: Yes. We were not close friends in any way.

She had been given a bum steer, too, because people had told her--this was before the day of nylons, and she had been told that silk things rotted very badly in the tropics and that cotton stockings were what she should bring. Well, you didn't wear cotton stockings even if the silk ones did rot! [laughter] So she had been given poor advice, and she wound up as a bride with a trousseau with cotton stockings.

Shearer: Is that just because cotton stockings were considered so déclassé?

Cox: Yes. Well, officers' wives, we'll say, wore silk stockings. I didn't particularly realize this when I arrived in Manila, but I realized it later. You lose track of styles and modes of dress and so on--after a while, your own things that you brought with you all fell apart, chiefly due to the humid climate, and you began to wear things you got locally, which were cotton and nicely embroidered and all (there was a lovely local embroidery business). But, at any rate, women began to yearn at least for knowledge of what was going on back in the States. So when the transports came in, all the women in town would go down to the dock to see the new women arrive, just to see what they were wearing. [chuckles]

One of Will's favorite stories concerned an incident on the U.S. Army Transport Liscum, before I was in Manila. The chief of water transportation was Colonel Bellinger. On one trip to the Liscum, Mrs. B. was making a tour of the southern islands. Also aboard was the wife of a captain, who was traveling under orders. Will thus assigned a better stateroom to the captain's wife, which annoyed Mrs. B. Will stood by the rule book, whereupon Mrs. B. threatened to report him to the colonel, which she did. When Colonel B. later called Will into the office, they reviewed the situation and the colonel congratulated Will for "getting the best of the old girl."

Teaching School in Manila

Cox: There was a big drive to get schoolteachers to go over to the Philippines to teach in the public schools. The United States really can take credit for the efforts they made to wipe out illiteracy in the Philippines. This was, you see, only some twenty years after the Spanish-American War. So the superintendent of schools in Manila would come home to this country to recruit. One time the man's name was Buley and so all these women teachers he brought back were called "Buley's Beauts." [laughter] Everybody in town went down to see the ship come in to see what the teachers from the States were wearing.

Shearer: And that occurred when you were there?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: That would have been when?

Cox: Well, I was there from February of 1918 to about August of 1919.

One other superintendent did it too, but I've forgotten his name. There was some slang expression like that, too, with his name.

Shearer: Is that how you happened to get a job teaching? That was your first job? Was it a well-paying job?

Cox: Yes. Well, on the transport going over, there was a teacher, a single woman, Allie Grinnell, and she was maybe a little older than I am. Her brother Garfield was already located in Manila. He worked for the Philippine Education Company. This was a bookstore with office supplies, stationery and that sort of thing. He was a bachelor; she was going over to join him.

So he knew, of course, about possibilities over there. Whether she went over to a job, I don't know, but at any rate she got a job, and then not long after she came to me. We were living in the same hotel. She told me that they were looking for another teacher at Miss Soule's school, and asked if I was interested. Miss Soule, who was the principal of the school, could not require, really a teacher's credential; all she could require was the A.B. degree, which I had.

Maybe I'd think of the name if I tried hard enough. The school was called the Bentley School. [spells name of school]

Shearer: And Miss Soule was S-o-u-l-e?

Cox: Yes. Lucy.

There was also Mrs. Ainsworth. Mrs. Ainsworth had been a nurse, as I believe, in the earlier days and had married well and was now a widow. So she had the money to buy the house; the school was in a private home, a great big tropical plantation-type house, a really large house. It was a day school. Mrs. Ainsworth had put up the money, as I understood it, and Miss Soule had the teaching background. How she came to Manila, I don't know.

But at any rate, there were, aside from this other woman and myself--I guess maybe there were only three or four of us teachers.

Shearer: And who were the students?

Cox: Well, this was for the white colony in Manila. It was a private school for people who did not wish to send their children to the public schools with the native children. So [there were] some foreign [students]: a French family owned a jewelry store in town--their daughter; some army officers' children; or people who were there for commercial reasons in the Philippines and sent their children to this private school.

Now, there were some white children in the public schools, but that was not considered proper. For instance, a man who was more or less the same grade in civil service that my husband had been was sent over. He had a wife and children, and they couldn't afford to live as well as we did (just a couple). They couldn't afford to send their children to a private school. So their children did go to the public school, and that was considered second class.

Shearer: Were "Buley's Beauts"--?

Cox: Well, those would have been teachers either in town or out in the sticks, out in the provinces.

Shearer: But they would have been teachers in--

Cox: Teachers in the public schools, yes.

Shearer: I see. How did your husband feel about your taking a job, first of all, and this job in particular?

Cox: Well, I don't recall that he had any thoughts about it. I don't recall that there was any problem there at all. It worked out very nicely. The office hours that he had while he was ashore were from, we'll say, seven in the morning till one in the afternoon. My hours of teaching were the same, just a half a day, from maybe eight in the morning till noontime or so. So we had the whole

Cox: afternoon together; our working hours were matched. What is it about [pauses]--mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun. [chuckles] People thought we were crazy. We were young and enthusiastic and wanted to know what was going on, so after lunch and a siesta perhaps we would go off sightseeing. We plowed around places in Manila and poked around and went to such places as ropeworks and once, with a considerable amount of effort, because they apparently didn't want to let us know the location, we finally found and saw the flagellantes.

### Witnessing the Flagellantes

Shearer: Really? Now, can you describe that?

Cox: Well, we had trouble in the first place finding out where this was going to occur, but we were given general directions by Filipinos to whom we had talked. We went in the car because we had a car in Manila (we called her Sadie). [chuckles] We came reasonably close to the area where this was going to take place. We got out to walk around and see what we could find, when we saw a Filipino, and he directed us. Then we later saw him performing as a flagellante, which made me feel a little squeamish. They really cut their backs with glass, and then they beat themselves with these bamboo sticks on a string, you know, or a rope, like this [gestures], and then the blood all ran down their backs. After they'd done that long enough (this was right near the seashore) they went into the saltwater and washed themselves off.

Shearer: Salt in the wounds.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Why did this occur?

Cox: Well, of course, it was against the law. Whether they still do it there or not, I don't know. I've understood they still do it in some area here in Arizona, for example, in outlying areas. Well, a man did it for penance.

Shearer: This was a corruption of the Christian teaching that sort of melded with the indigenous religion?

Cox: Well, yes. A person would say, "If my wife is cured of this or that," or, "If I am forgiven for stealing or some other crime, I will be a flagellante." Or others would do this to pay for the sins of a whole community that perhaps had done wrong. It was an act of penance.

Shearer: Public penance.

Cox: Yes, public penance, either for a personal misdeed of some kind or perhaps for a community wrong. They actually cut themselves or somebody cut them on the back to make the blood flow, and then they beat themselves with these small flails. There would be four, five, six bamboo sticks, you know, on a rope, and they'd go like this [gestures].

Shearer: They were all adults and all men?

Cox: Yes. All men. I suppose they wore pants, but they were stripped to the waist. Then after they had done this a reasonable length of time (and I don't know whether they counted strokes or whether it was until they got weak, or what) they threw themselves on the ground in the shape of a cross, and then that was the end as far as they were concerned; that was the end of their performance.

Shearer: How often did this occur?

Cox: Eastertime, once a year. It was part of the Easter celebration [chuckles], if you want to call it that. I guess it was even then against the law as far as the United States government was concerned, and I don't know to what extent the church may have frowned on it because it was a religious thing.

Shearer: Did there appear to be any real attempt at secrecy?

Cox: Well, yes, to the extent that we had difficulty around town finding out where to go, and when we finally were given just general directions I don't know whether we ever would have found the place if we hadn't happened to meet this man who was going there to be a flagellante himself. He directed us, and then later we recognized him in the group. I don't remember how many there were. There were, perhaps, ten, fifteen people going at it all at once.

Shearer: And was there a large crowd of spectators?

Cox: Well, reasonably, yes.

##

Shearer: Was this your introductory experience with Catholicism.

Cox: Yes, to Catholicism on a primitive level like that. I had had one neighbor in Alameda who was a Catholic girl, and I had gone to the church a time or two, when she was taking communion or something of that kind. (Gladys and I had not known enough to cover our heads. We used handkerchiefs.) But I had not ever had any real knowledge or awareness of the primitive interpretation of Catholicism.

The Dog Market at Baguio

Shearer: You mentioned, I think, at our first meeting that you also witnessed the dog market in Manila.

Cox: Yes.

Cox: That was at Baguio. [spells name of city] Baguio is a couple of hundred miles or so north of Manila, and it's just as if you were in the temperate zone again; there are pine trees. The army still has a place up there. I asked someone just recently. The army had a place called Camp John Hay where officers went for vacations or for respites of one kind and another. I suppose wealthy Filipinos had places up there too; I don't remember about that. Now Baguio is on the tourist map--and also other places that you couldn't go in those days, like the rice terraces and all that; the tourists go there now. But in those days, it was difficult to get there. [tape off briefly] To get to Baguio--we went by train from Manila to a town and from there we went in army trucks up the mountains, circuitous, lots of curves, to Baguio, which then was very lovely--temperate zone type climate and trees and all.

Here there was a mission, an Episcopal mission, one of those established by Bishop Brent. At this mission school the children were taught to make lace or weave or do basketwork, partly vocational and then also for sale.

Then there was an open native market, and that's where I bought the G string, a real one, which is one of the things I gave to the museum recently, the [Lowie] Anthropology [Museum].

Shearer: Really? [In] Kroeber [Hall]?

Cox: Yes, [in] Kroeber.

Well, anyway, we went to the dog market. Dogs were starved until they were barely able to stand; they were just so weak and emaciated. Then they were fed rice. Well, of course, they gobbled it down. Then they were beaten to death.

Shearer: Oh! Right after being fed?

Cox: [nods] And the point of the whole thing was to eat the rice soaked with the entrails of the dogs. Whether they ate the dogs' flesh, I really don't know. But at any rate, that was the delicacy.

Shearer: You mean immediately after the dogs consumed the rice they were--

Cox: Well, within, you know, a short period of time. I suppose they had to give them time to digest it a little bit. I don't know really. They cooked it and I thought it was the flesh of the dogs they were after. But I learned later it was the rice with the entrails, and then whether they ate the flesh, I really don't know.

Shearer: Why were the dogs beaten to death?

Cox: Well, that's the easiest way to kill them, I guess, or maybe they wanted to mash it all up. [laughter] Can we get any more gruesome? [laughter]

Shearer: Did you witness the whole process?

Cox: [laughter] No, no. I saw the dogs and I'm not sure how much of the rest I saw and how much I was told.

Anyway, the Igorots were the natives here. Ifugaos lived in another area.

Even in those days the rice terraces were supposed to be one of the fifteen wonders of the world--tremendous, the way they had carved them out of the hillsides and stoned them up and made little plots. Recently I read that there's a proposal that a lot of that is going to be destroyed because they want to put in a dam to bring the water from the mountains down into the lower areas. To think of [destroying] those really--well, I don't know how ancient they were, you know--ancient rice paddies on the hillsides would, to a nature lover, be pretty awful, wouldn't it?

Shearer: Oh, yes. Are they still there?

Cox: So, I don't know. Well, I haven't seen that the dam has actually gone in, but that's one of the proposals to get water into the lowlands, and it would destroy a great deal of the mountain area.

### Social Life in Manila

Shearer: What was your social standing as a couple in that community? Were you aware of the--

Cox: In Manila?

Shearer: In Manila, yes.

Cox: Nil. [laughter] That is to say, we were civilians and had absolutely no ranking with the officers. The only connection we had with an officer's family was that going over on the transport, on the dock before we left, we had seen this officer's wife with a child about four or five years old, and we were very attracted to him. He was a little boy and he had an overcoat and gloves and was carrying a little suitcase. Later on, we outfitted one of ours the same way. [laughter] He and his mother were going to join the major who was stationed in Manila. The officers' families lived in a compound.

How she chose us, I don't remember, but part of the way over, the mother was not well, and she asked us if we would take care of this little boy whose name was Billy. So we did for a number of days. He stayed in our cabin, and he brought his little suitcase with his nightclothes and things and also a little tin cup which he used for a urinal if he had to get up in the night. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] How old was he?

Cox: Well, I don't know. Four or five years old. Preschool.

I don't know why she chose us, how we became the ones that were the "parents" of this little boy. But at any rate, we called on her a few times, in Manila.

Perhaps I should explain how I happened to be traveling on the Liscum as it was not customary for wives of the ship's officer to do so. At this time, in 1918, the U.S. Army was changing its policy in the Philippines. The army bases in the southern islands were being closed. The Liscum was not then on a regular run. It was going to former army posts to bring back the corrugated iron and other salvage and the salvage crews.

In the days before Will came home to be married, one of the sergeants in the southern islands had a wife who was not well and who needed to go to another island for medical care. The Liscum had very poor accommodations for a non-commissioned officer's wife who was not traveling under orders, and so Will had given her his cabin several times.

By the time we got to Manila together, this sergeant, due to the war, was a major stationed in Manila and was in charge of water transportation. The Liscum was really being used as a freighter. And to return the favor, the major arranged for me to go along, rather sub rosa on a number of trips. In this way, I went to Iloilo, Cebu, Zamboango, Jolo, and Legaspi.

Cox: Then there was a family in the southern islands. My husband part of the time in the Philippines was quartermaster agent on the transport Liscum, and he became friendly with this man who was commanding officer in one of the bases in the southern islands. We were invited to dinner at the major's house [at Iloilo], and this was the first time I ever ate off of silver plates. They had a dinner service of silver--dinner plates and all the rest--and the first and only time I ever ate off a silver dinner service. I was quite impressed. However, by contrast, the house had no inside plumbing. Each day the servants had to remove the container which was used as a toilet in the inside bathroom.

Later, when we all came back to this country, we called on them, perhaps exchanged Christmas cards, and so on. They lived in Oakland for a long while.

But as far as a social life was concerned, most of our social life was with people in the commercial area of Manila or the American teachers. Since my husband had been there in Manila a couple of years before I went over, he had friends in the YMCA and other places, some of them married and some not. We went to church some, where there were opportunities to meet people.

To begin with I had lived in the St. Anthony Hotel (this was while my husband was in the transport). Later we moved into a flat. It was in a block of concrete houses, rather sparse, at 312 Calle Nebraska. Next door was the brother-sister team, the Grinnells. We had living with us a man and his wife. He was a commercial man downtown in Manila, and she ran the household since she was older than I and had--

Shearer: The commercial man's wife?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: I see. How did you share quarters? How did that work out?

Cox: Well, it was a two-story house with two bedrooms upstairs with a bath, and the living quarters downstairs, so that each couple had a bedroom and then the common rooms downstairs. To allow for circulation of air, the wall between the bedrooms did not go all the way to the ceiling. This reduced our privacy considerably.

But the first couple [James and Betty Noon] we lived with were somewhat older than we were. He was with the Pacific Commercial Company, and she had kept house before, so then we just paid our half. Then they were transferred to Japan and we became the senior residents, and a couple who had been teaching out in the sticks joined us. [They] had come into Manila, and they were

- Cox: teaching then in Manila, and so they shared the flat with us. As I was the senior partner, I ran the house, and they paid their share of the expenses. They returned to the Boston area where we kept in touch with them for many years.
- Shearer: Did that make it easier for you to sort of work into the routine of being a housewife? I recall your saying that you didn't learn to cook until after you were married.
- Cox: Well, that's right. And, of course, I had never had any experience with a family that had servants. An American woman or a white woman lost caste if she did housework herself. I told you about the family [stationed in Manila] where the children went to the public school, and the wife [in that family] did the housework and so on and lost caste.
- Shearer: But it was not considered a lowering of your social standing to work in the school itself?
- Cox: No. There were a number of married couples, both husband and wife working. And then afterward--perhaps it was in vacation; I don't just remember why--I also worked in this stationery and book store downtown, the Philippine Ed, as a clerk behind the counter. That was comparable to Smith Brothers in Oakland. I worked there, too. I guess that would have been after school closed. Garfield Grinnell was part owner of the store.

The school is rather interesting as far as the curriculum was concerned. There was a course of study put out by a firm in the eastern part of the United States which was really designed for American or British women who were living in isolated areas and wanted to tutor their own children. This course of study had been developed for them, and then it was adapted for use in this school, so we, for instance, didn't have to really develop our own lesson plans; we followed the lesson plans that were provided.

Shearer: Did you enjoy that?

Cox: Yes.

#### The Bentley School Moves to Berkeley

Cox: Then we came home first. After that, Miss Soule and Mrs. Ainsworth came home, too, and they opened the Bentley School in Berkeley, which I believe is still there, and I taught there.

Shearer: Yes. I see. Did you earn a good salary?

Cox: I don't remember. I imagine I could look it up because I think we kept all those records.

Shearer: Did you feel free to spend your earnings on yourself?

Cox: To begin with, there was some thought of "my money" and "your money." I remember particularly, when I by then was in the Bentley School in Berkeley, I bought my husband a suit one time [chuckles] and bought myself clothes another time. It was really sort of money to be used for extra things, not to go into the pot, you see.

I taught there until the summer before my first child was born in September. When I knew by earlier in the spring that I was pregnant and told them that I was, they suggested that as long as I was willing, regardless of my blooming future [chuckles], I stay with them; they didn't mind.

Shearer: That was unusual, was it not?

Cox: Yes, I thought so. I don't remember now whether there was any discussion among the children or anything because, of course, by the time school was over in June (and he was born early in September), it was obvious that I was pregnant. It was good for me in a way because morning sickness or not, you know, I had to get on to Berkeley. I never did have much trouble with pregnancies, but whether having to get up and be off every day was good, I don't know.

At any rate, by then we had this Ford coupe, and a friend of mine who was pregnant at the same time (the babies came about the same time)--we used to go do our shopping together until I was [chuckles] really too big to get behind the wheel of the car. So here were these two big pregnant women going around in this little Ford coupe doing their shopping. [laughter] We were friends for many years. She died only recently.

##

## VII RAISING A FAMILY

### Birth of the Children

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, dear!

Who's the oldest son?

Cox: Bill. I had a miscarriage in between, and that's why there are several years between Bill and Paul and then only two years between Paul and David. There are about four years. Well, Bill was born in 1921, Paul in 1926, and David in 1928.

Shearer: Was that a frightening experience, the miscarriage?

Cox: No, no. I've really kind of forgotten about it. It must have been very early in the game, and it wasn't anything visible. In fact, I hardly knew what had passed. I suppose I knew I was pregnant, maybe. I'm not even sure of that. I must have known that. No, the fetus was not recognizable or anything like that. No, that was not a [frightening experience].

Shearer: Did you go to a doctor?

Cox: Yes, I must have, or called him in. In those days, they made house calls. [laughter]

Shearer: Yes, yes. Oh, the dear old days!

How did your husband--? Was that a great disappointment? You said you had planned every child, so perhaps this one was planned as well.

Cox: Yes. Oh, I suppose we were disappointed, but after all we were young and we had one, and it didn't hold us back from having two more. [chuckles] The reason that we didn't have more than three is that my husband said he'd always understood that every fourth child born in the world was a Chinaman.

## ALL STOOPING TO CONQUER



Mrs. T. P. Cox Jr. (top), Mrs. Alma Allen, Mrs. E. D. Anderson.

## EXTRA POUNDS GOING AWAY

Thirty Alameda housewives and business women are busy stooping to conquer.

Their stooping comprises a major portion of athletic exercise required by the gymnasium club which they have formed under the auspices of the First Methodist Episcopal Church and they are conquering corpulence.

The club, which has been organized for several months, is now rapidly proving its worth, in the opinion of Mrs. W. H. Cox Jr., Mrs. T. B. Barry, Mrs. E. D. Anderson and other members of the organization.

If keeping in trim is good for a man, they say, keeping trim is good for a woman. "You can't imagine how many extra pounds of surplus flesh is strewn around this gymnasium floor," Mrs. Cox added.

"Of course, none of us were ever stout, but when we started the club first there were several of us who were—ah—a bit plump.

"But we play basketball and jump rope and go through a regular series of exercises and we are not only a whole lot more slender, but we are ever so much better physically too."

Furthermore, the women attest, the gymnasium has added to their independence. Before the class started, they say, they were entirely dependent upon friend husband for such help as bringing in the coal. Now, they claim, if he forgets this duty, they'll do it themselves—or make him remember.

Membership in the club, Mrs. Cox said, is open to any woman who wants to join. The organization meets each Tuesday evening at 8:45 in the recreation center of the First Methodist Episcopal Church at Oak street and Central avenue.

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, that must have been a joke!

Cox: [laughter] Well, I said I wasn't going to fill the back yard with boys waiting for the girls. Obviously, David was not supposed to be the third boy. [chuckles] Whether that has been a burden to him all of his life, I don't know; Paul said [to him], "You were supposed to be the baby sister." [laughter] How they knew that--I'm sure I didn't ever say that--you wonder afterwards what there was in the climate of the household that children absorb these ideas because you don't think you ever sat him down and said, "You're going to have a baby sister."

Shearer: Yes, although perhaps they did question you.

Cox: To what extent that's a burden--I thought it would have been easier for David all these years if he had been a girl. It was a little difficult being the third boy, you know, trailing along. He was the last to go to Scout camp; he was the last to do this; he was the last to do that. While in some ways the oldest child pioneers and it's easier for the younger ones, there is also more competition. It was difficult on the middle one too because instead of being willing to play with the younger one, where there was only two years' difference, he was always trying to keep up to the older one, where there was a four-year difference, you see.

Shearer: Do you think that was just a personality thing?

Cox: I think Paul was a typical middle child. [laughter] If you believe in the theory of position in the family, you know, I think my three children were complete examples of the elder, the middle and the youngest.

Shearer: How did they fit, do you think?

Cox: Well, Bill was always a kind of stern disciplinarian, always thinking that the others should shape up. [chuckles] Paul, as I've indicated, I think, was always trying to keep up to the older one, when it would have been more appropriate for him to be contented to be with the younger one. David was always bringing up the rear.

In those days, the Scouts were rather strict about ages for going to camp, for instance. Now they allow campers younger, I guess, than twelve. But at any rate, you had to be twelve years old, and there were no Cub Scouts in those days; you had to wait until you were twelve. We sent David two years, I guess, to YMCA camp down at La Honda because we thought he was getting so tired of hanging around [chuckles] waiting for his turn.

- Cox: Then I wondered if I'd made a big mistake, because I took him over to the YMCA in Oakland and got him off and then went on to Berkeley and spent that whole week auditing classes. Whether he got the idea that I could hardly wait to get rid of him [chuckles], or whether he saw going to the Y camp as a favor to him, who's to say? I had a tremendous week. I went every day and audited classes.
- Shearer: How was it when he came back? Was it a letdown for you to have all the children back, or your youngest back?
- Cox: No, I guess not, because it was just one of the facts of life. I'd had a week's release. [laughter] I was beginning to get a little tired at that point. By the time I'd been married fifteen years or so--well, I remember when he went to kindergarten, I felt that was really evolving. [laughter]
- Shearer: You were sprung. How old was he when he went to the YMCA camp?
- Cox: Oh, ten, I guess. That would have been 1938.
- Shearer: And you were married in--
- Cox: In 1917. By the time he went to kindergarten, I'd been married about fifteen years and was getting a little tired. [laughter]
- Shearer: That's right.
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#### The Question of Equal Parenting

- Shearer: Well, you told me a little bit about the birth of your children, but I wonder what happened after you came home from the hospital? Did you have help come in?
- Cox: Well, not particularly, because in those days we stayed in the hospital two weeks, so that you were pretty well up on your feet by the time you got home, with what care your husband or--well, my mother, you see, always lived in this neighborhood. In fact, later on, as the children grew older, she gave me a half a day off a week, just like the maids had. We would decide at the beginning of the week. Since she didn't have many or any activities outside of home, it would depend; it wasn't always the same day each week, in other words. It was whenever I had something that I wanted to do; she would come down and be here with the children. In those days they darned socks, you know, and she would do things like that, mending and all, and I would have a half day off.

Cox: When the children were little (and this was something I had to learn), my husband was very good about their care (I mean to say, when they were babies) as far as changing diapers and taking care of them. They frequently called him in the night more often than me when they wanted something. I thought he was doing this as his share of--well, the word "parenting" hadn't been invented then, but that's what it was.

But later, as his business horizons and his social and fraternal activities away from home developed, I discovered that he had not been doing all that as his share of responsibility; he had been doing it to help me. When it was no longer convenient to help me, or if he had other things he preferred to do, I was left holding the sack. About that time I thought that in every house there ought to be a padded room somewhere where people could go up and scream when things got too much for them. [laughter]

Shearer: Did you have a sense before the children came that you expected the father and the mother to do equal parenting?

Cox: No, no. I remember, when we were either engaged or early married (I don't remember), he got very sentimental once and said, wasn't it going to be lovely to have babies' arms around our necks? [laughter] But, no, there hadn't been any agreement and, of course, it was unusual at that time for a man to expect to do it. In fact, one of the unpleasant things I have to say about my husband is when he would find me rebellious about this, he told me that it was not his fault that he was a man and I was a woman, and because I was confined at home there was no need he should be. I took that kind of hard.

But by then he belonged to Kiwanis Club and a little later on he was active in his Masonic lodge. He was beginning to play golf. On the golf business, I was so unpleasant about that that every time he paid green fees--he never belonged to a golf club, country club, or anything; he played on the municipal course here. Every time he paid his green fees, he put money aside for me, and I used it for flying.

Shearer: I remember you told me about the flying. Wonderful! That didn't start with the first child, though.

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: Wasn't that after the birth of--?

Cox: Well, it was after David came.

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A Child's View of Ownership and Credit

Cox: Well, when David was small, there were no nursery schools or co-ops or anything of that kind, so there was nothing until kindergarten. We had another experience then with him. When he went to kindergarten I had mornings off, and I joined a local women's club which had section meetings. The one in which I was most interested, the drama section, met in the morning. I was supposed to be here in time for lunch. One day, because of a streetcar strike or something or other, I was delayed. When I got home, I found that a neighbor had taken him in because he'd gotten home early.

It seems that the kindergarten teacher had taken the children on a walk around the neighborhood. David always was interested in hats. If ever we had a painter at the house, he wanted a painter's hat, or that kind of thing. Well, it seems that one of the children for a show and tell had brought his father's veteran's cap, and David had lifted it. So, when they took this walk, he decided it was safer to come home than to stay with the group [laughter], and as a result he got home and there was no mother here. He didn't know what to do at that point, so the neighbor took him in till I got home.

Then, of course, there was the question, what to do about the cap? [laughter] Naturally, he was required to take it back, but I remember I did allow him to put it in a paper sack [laughter] so that it could be done in as unobtrusive a fashion as possible.

In those days you didn't go to a supermarket; there were neighborhood groceries. The people (in this case it was the three owners) waited on you at the counter. You read off your list, and they went and got stuff, so that it was a sort of a social occasion; you got to know people and meet your neighbors. I can remember bundling the children up when they were small and going up to the store whether I terribly needed anything or not, just because I was anxious for adult companionship. I never would allow myself, as other customers did, to call them by their first names because I had a feeling--

Shearer: You mean the grocery clerks?

Cox: The grocery clerks were the store owners. I have a feeling that adults who are not privileged to call me by my first name, should not be called by their first names by me. So, it was always "Mister" as far as I was concerned.

Cox: Later, when I had a grandchild, she thought that was a nice store to trade in, because I didn't have to use any money. I ran an account there, and so we could go there and buy stuff and not have any money. I guess by then her mother was shopping in super-markets, you see. That was her first lesson in credit. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] That money was not required.

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### Interests and Friends as a Married Couple

Cox: After my husband began to work for the School Department in Alameda, he began to be known in the community. He had a great many activities which later on annoyed me very much because they took him away from home so much. Those were the days when he played golf and had to pay green fees.

He became president of the Kiwanis Club. He was very active in the Boy Scouts which took a great deal of time for a number of years. (The organization ignored women.) He (what I thought was the last blow) went through the chairs of the Masonic Lodge. He had a great many activities away from home, not social activities particularly, more fraternal or that type. He didn't ever, for instance, belong to the Elks.

Shearer: The Elks are more of a social character?

Cox: I would say so, yes. The Kiwanis Club is a businessman's group, like the Rotary and so on.

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Cox: Over the years, I got tired of going places with Will, who was always on the committee. I went alone, went early, stayed late, while he attended to duties. In those days, the Kiwanis sponsored a Halloween parade for children. The boys always took part as a unit, which after a year or so took a good bit of ingenuity. Having gone ahead to help with the organizing of the evening, I was left to get the boys ready and to escort an elderly neighbor to the event. This seems a petty matter now, but at the time I found it annoying.

##

Cox: But it took my husband a number of years in his business and so on to get these obligations and these activities. Of course, as far as the Kiwanis Club was concerned, we were always traveling with people beyond our economic level. A business pays the expenses of its members; the school department did not. So we were meeting his

- Cox: dues and luncheon expenses and so on. That didn't particularly bother us. We were not interested in the cocktail parties. While I had a long dress and we would go places, the fact that we only saw them at those occasions and then didn't mingle with them socially otherwise was no problem. There were a few people that we knew through the school department or in other ways with whom we were friendly and on an even basis. We would have card parties or go around to each other's homes and so on.
- Shearer: Did you have friends together, couples that you both liked equally well?
- Cox: Yes. At one time, there was an interesting group of young women in the church, way back in our early married days. We invented a name for ourselves [Tywala\*]. We were all young women with some connection with the church who had small children. There was always somebody pregnant or with a new baby. We were not really welcome at the Ladies' Aid [laughter] because they were beyond the childbearing age, so we had our own little group. It was as much a social group as it was to contribute anything to the church. We met around in each other's homes and we took the children with us. Well, then we used to have our own little parties with the husbands, and we had some social life as a couple that way.

There were also a few other people, either people that worked for the School Department or, perhaps, were members of the Kiwanis Club, where we had parties around in different people's homes. There was also a college group. Those of us who married were married, and we met rather regularly around in different people's houses and played poker. This would have been in the '20s and '30s. Somebody was always getting a new house and having a housewarming, and somebody was having one more child.

So, we had a considerable amount of couples' life in those days, all centered really around families in a way, so that we were not at all bereft of social activities.

##

- Shearer: Did the women use one another as emotional resources? I mean, didn't you find other women feeling--perhaps not with the first child, or perhaps with the first child--trapped or frustrated?
- Cox: Not with any of these women that I'm speaking of. But there was a woman in the next block, and I've often wondered what became of her, and maybe sometime when I'm in Sacramento I'll see if she's still in the phone book. I don't remember what it was her husband

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\*The Young Women's Ladies Aid

Cox: did, but she had the same yearnings and discontents and so on that I was experiencing, and she and I used to cry on each other's shoulders a good deal, but that was because she was nearby. We didn't belong to groups, and I don't remember that I shared these experiences with any of these other people that I'm speaking about whom we met socially. But this woman down the block--and she had two children, we'll say, about the ages of mine.

But for the most part, the women accepted their lot and didn't particularly rebel. I often think now when young women go out in the evening, in those earlier days it was understood that a woman had her daytimes free and perhaps she had weekends, but she was not supposed to go out to hen parties and so on at night. When people would call me up and invite me to go somewhere, I would say, "Well, I would love to go. Let me see what I can do about the children." My husband used to chide me on that. He said, "You can't say that. It sounds like you don't want to go." Apparently he never had to say that; he just took it for granted that I would be there, you see, whereas I couldn't take it for granted that he was going to be around. So I don't think that he ever really appreciated the differences.

Shearer: Because he didn't experience that same sense of limitation?

Cox: No, and he just saw that as a man's role was different from a woman's role, and that he was supposed to earn the living and I was supposed to bring up the rear. [laughter]

Shearer: Thinking back to the time when you were wearing the suffragette buttons and you were close to Mildred Adams, did any of these issues arise for you then, even academically? I guess it would have been academic in those times, in 1916 or '17.

### A Second Blow to Youthful Ideals

Cox: No. I was always a good student. I competed scholastically. I was a candidate for honors at Cal, but I didn't make that, and that was one of two occasions where my idealism about the university got a big blow.

Shearer: I remember you wrote a paper criticizing the county's administration of Mothers' Pension Act.

Cox: Yes. And where they kept their records, and that they were not in very good shape. It was a great blow to me that my idealistic conception of the economics department and the university--[that they] would be so politically minded that they would object to what I said.

Shearer: This was the occasion on which Dean Stebbins gave you to understand that honor status was denied to you because of the derogatory tone of your comments?

Cox: It was Lucy Stebbins or somebody, and the reply was "Well, what did you expect when you made those comments about the county?" or some such implication. I wasn't told straight out. And that was a great blow to me.

The second disillusionment was a number of years later. By now I was with the state PTA, and I represented them once at an adult education conference and realized that the University Extension thought it had a vested interest in adult education, and was resentful or dragging their heels on the community colleges and the development of adult education programs in the public schools, in evening school, you see.

Shearer: This was about what [time]?

Cox: Oh, this would have been in the '40s somewhere, or maybe '50s.

Everybody interested in adult education was at this meeting and, of course, the reason the state PTA was there was because they were great sponsors of these parent education classes and always endorsing adult education and all. So we were there not as participatns--I mean, as on the program--but as, you know, the common herd. And there were the University Extension and the community colleges (which weren't off to as good a start as they are now). Also there were the public schools, the K through 12 schools, which were just developing the adult education departments which they now have, with day and evening classes.

I was really horrified at the attitude of the spokesman for the University Extension, who felt that all of this was undercutting their opportunity.

Shearer: Their opportunity to provide that service?

Cox: To provide that service and to have a monopoly on it, and that anything else that was being done was undercutting their chances.

So there again I was not quite ready for the commercial side or the nonidealistic side of the university. So I guess I was a green pea even at that date, as late as that! [laughter]

Family Outings and Vacation Trips

Cox: We used to take the boys to the opera. As I remember it, there was a spring season where the tickets were less expensive. We "ate out" especially at a favorite Oakland restaurant, the Sea Cave. The boys also took piano lessons, my mother by then having given her piano to us.

Also I was thinking today about the vacations we took. We made a great effort to get these children (I sometimes say drag them) around the country. We didn't have money to travel in hotels and so on, and motels were not as available as they are now. There were what they called auto courts that had housekeeping units. But we went lots of places, including as far away as Salt Lake City and so on, with camping equipment. We had a small trailer, a camp trailer. We tried never to make one-night stands because that was just too much effort. But we camped out, and we took a box of city clothes with us [chuckles] for when we would be [in town]. We went to the Olympic Games in 1932.

Shearer: I can't remember where that was.

Cox: Los Angeles. That's the only reason we could go. [chuckles]

And there's again where we may have done David in. David was only four, and we thought he was a little young. It turned out that Mrs. Pennock next door was going to have a grandchild of about that same age living with her, so we left David with my mother, and we took the other two children and went to the Olympic Games. Now, whether at four we should have made the effort to take him, or whether he still remembers that, I don't know.

Shearer: I bet if you asked him he'd reassure you. [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] We did a great many things in the summer to take those children around which took considerable planning and some effort. Every one helped with setting up and breaking camp. I didn't apologize for the simple meals, but I didn't get a vacation from them, either. When they get together now, those are the things they talk about, these summers or these adventures that we had. We went to--it was when we were at Old Faithful, that David came down with the mumps.

Shearer: Oh, dear! At the geyser!

Cox: Well, we were on our way home at that point. There was nothing to do but come home, so we fixed up as comfortable a bed as we could for him in the back seat of the car, and the rest of us crouched in anyway we could. We were, of course, afraid to take him into a

- Cox: restaurant [laughter], so some of us stayed with him and the rest brought out food. David must have caught them from someone along the way, and he must have given them to someone, too [laughter] but we never knew about that.
- Shearer: Where were you on your way home from?
- Cox: Well, whether that was the time we'd been as far as Salt Lake City, I just don't remember.
- Shearer: That's remarkable.
- Cox: I probably told you about the language situation once in Salt Lake City. Did I tell you about that?
- Shearer: I don't think so, no.
- Cox: Well, this was one of the places we stayed in an auto court, and we stayed there several days. The auto court had a playground for children, and so our children went down to play, and I thought, well, that was a long way to take children to let them go down a slide, you know. [laughter] Anyway, this was David again. They came back for a meal and were talking about all these different accents, and, apparently, on the playground children were calling each other by the names of their states. David had been impressed by a little girl with a southern accent. So they went to play again, and David came back again and said, "Mama, what do you think! That girl says I have an accent!" I often say that was their first lesson in internationalism. [laughter]

#### Matching Child Development Theory with Real Life

- Shearer: Did you have any theories about child raising? What did you bring from your experience in child raising to the PTA parent education workshops that you helped to lead?
- Cox: Horror stories. [laughter]
- Shearer: [laughter] Do you mean things you felt you'd handled badly, or feelings that were hard to deal with?
- Cox: Well, to begin with, I guess women were just supposed to have a maternal instinct, you know. But I always said that when a woman had another child, she ought to grow another arm. [chuckles] It really wasn't fair. I didn't see how it would be any more miraculous, you know, really, if you stop to think of it. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] That's right.

Cox: So I don't know that we had any theory. Then when I became interested in parent education, and since I apparently needed a good excuse to read and to study and maybe let the dusting go, I began to read extensively and I then [read] Freud and Adler and all the rest of them. That was when I began to analyze my own family relations in terms of all of this, as my relations with my husband. [chuckles] How valid this was or not, I do not know but when I read about what was called adolescent weaning, I decided my husband had done that from me instead of from his mother. He was very close to his mother who was his stepmother, and she was very protective of him. He felt that the only reason she had married his father was because the father was left with a small child. They never had children of their own; that is, his father and stepmother never did. He was very close to her. This older friend Bob whom I've already mentioned-- I've heard him say that she kept awfully tight reins on Will. I mean, if he was out somewhere in the evening, she'd frequently sit up to hear about it when he got in. I guess she was dependent on him, too, for emotional satisfaction. I always figured that he hadn't broken away from the family unit with his mother, and that then later he did it with me.

Shearer: By doing what?

Cox: By his willingness to, I thought, put me aside while he was developing his community activities and so on; that the ties that he should have broken away from his mother, he broke away from from me. I was convinced of that--valid or not.

So then I'm sure I talked the family to death.

Shearer: You reported on your reading?

Cox: Well, yes, and besides that, after I began to have classes, I would bring up cases that had been brought up in class, incidents that had happened, either just to talk about them or to ask them what their opinion was.

This would be at the dinner table. I got so interested in what you might call mental health, hygiene, or whatever they call it now, that I thought they ought to have get-togethers like church. I wasn't interested in church or the emotionalism of church, but I could see an advantage to people of like mind getting together occasionally to swap experiences or to reinforce each other. Perhaps if I had known about something like the Unitarian church in those days [chuckles]--because the Methodist church was very emotional.

Present Views on Child-Raising Issues##

Shearer: You mentioned earlier that one thing that you had vowed to do differently, to correct a distortion that you perceived in your husband's upbringing, was to sort of wean your children away from you so that they wouldn't have to turn away from their wives.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Looking back or looking, I guess, now, to the present, do you think that you achieved what you hoped in that respect?

Cox: Well, I sometimes think I overdid it to the point where--I am not a particularly demonstrative person, as I have said before, and since I had gotten this idea of what I should do, I became less demonstrative than ever with the boys. It really was only the later years, once they were all grown up together [laughter], now when they're grown up, that we kiss each other, we embrace each other. Well, we don't just go around lollygagging, but when we greet each other or when we say goodbye there's a very warm feeling and willing[ness] to embrace and to kiss. It's possible that I overdid it in those days by cutting off. That would not have been contrary to my nature to cut off, and it's possible that I overdid that. If I did, I think [the effect of] it is all over with now. I don't think they ever had any idea that I wasn't devoted to them, and I certainly have never had any idea that they're not very fond of me. It's just whether you express that in either vocal or body language.

Shearer: What seems to you, looking back over your own child-raising years and the days of the parent education workshops, to be the most important things that parents can give their children in terms of examples or training or emotional support?

Cox: One of the things which I didn't realize until I began to go into all this study in the '30s was the importance of recognizing individual differences in children, and I think that would be one of the points, and also sibling relationships and perhaps sibling rivalry. Regarding individual differences, I tried to deal with each boy the same way, usually, and perhaps that was not the correct thing to do.

One of the things that I found very interesting, because I thought it was borne out with my own three children, was the influence of what's called position in the family. That sort of thing I was not prepared for, and I found it of particular interest.

Cox: And then even the subconscious preference of a parent for one child, which I think in my own relationship may have been there more than I had ever been willing to admit, or that I really-- For instance, when the boys would get into arguments, for a time it seemed to me that one of them had the most logical position until I finally realized what I was doing. Another time, I came to realize that I was disapproving of one of the boys because he was showing traits which I did not admire in myself.

Then unconscious motives, for instance, and the fact that sometimes you gloss over negative feelings with greater protective feelings, or you cover up resentment with a show of positive forces, I found that idea interesting. And then compensation, how you psychologically make up for one thing or another, either a real handicap or whatever, by compensating in some other way.

Shearer: These are things you wish that you had known more about when you were raising your own children, or that you've tried to--

Cox: These are things that I learned in the parent education classes. Perhaps it would have been helpful to have known them earlier.

Shearer: I see.

Cox: However, my children were then eight, ten, and thirteen or so, so it wasn't too late for me to [laughter] still begin to understand.

All of the understanding that they used to call mental hygiene or mental health impressed me. I really was carried away and I must have bored the family to tears because I'd come home from classes where the women had brought up certain problems, and I would insist on discussing it at the dinner table and ask how they thought it should be handled. I think they sometimes used to wish Mother would just, you know, go jump off. [laughter] But I was really fired with the whole idea that this was going to save humanity. Since I didn't have any religious or church interests, I thought, "Why don't they meet every Sunday morning?" [laughter] I could see the value of group enthusiasm--I really fell for that.

In those days, what is now accepted and everybody knows--what an inferiority feeling is and all the rest of it--that was news in those days, you know, with Freud and Jung and Adler and all of that: the conscious and the unconscious and the ego and the id and all that business. One of them--was it Adler? Who was it that was the inferiority feeling man?

Anyway, then, oh, feminine/masculine, and to what extent there are truly feminine and masculine traits, and to what extent even a boy will have so-called feminine traits, to be fond of nice things

- Cox: or artistic and so on--interests that don't tie in with a macho feeling in men. I think that type of thing is better understood and accepted now than it was. You know, I'm going back forty years now! [laughter]
- Shearer: Do you still feel hopeful that these notions are going to have an effect?
- Cox: [laughter] Well, if you don't feel hopeful, what is there in life?!  
[laughter] Sometimes it takes an awfully long time, but--  
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### Learning to Respect Intuition

- Cox: And all my life--now, just recently I regretted something, that I really wanted to do something and I decided it was silly and I didn't do it, because I didn't let my intuition take control over my mental processes.

In my younger days, I bragged that I had never cried at a movie or theater performance. I was determined to push down the emotional for the intellectual. Now, not on a sexual basis. I was sexually responsive to my husband, and vice versa, but otherwise, from an emotional standpoint, sad stories or sad movies, I--

- Shearer: Why do you think that was true?
- Cox: Well, I don't know, I don't know.
- Shearer: Was your mother given to displays? No.
- Cox: I have said that my family was not at all demonstrative. I did not grow up in a family where demonstrativeness was the pattern, and I had that same difficulty with my own children, and we've sort of broken it now that we're all grown up. [laughter]
- Shearer: How was it difficult for you? Difficult to appreciate emotional displays?
- Cox: Well, I still am not touchy-feely. I don't enjoy touching people.

After I had decided that my husband had done from me what he should have done from his mother, I wanted to see to it that my sons were going to do it from me! I don't mean that I pushed them out of the next, but I think that it was my temperament not to be demonstrative, and with my thought that I didn't want to have the boys so dependent on their mother that they didn't go off on their own, there was comparatively little hugging and kissing after they

Cox: were little. There was lots of it when they were little, were babies, and cute and all, you know. I was not particularly interested in small children. I liked them better when they could answer back. [laughter] Then I didn't always like that either!

Shearer: [laughter] Yes, that's a risk.

Cox: I was not the type of woman who--some women love the little ones, the dependency and all, and that didn't appeal to me. That was what you had to go through with to get them a little bigger.

I can illustrate what I mean by not giving way to impulses.

Shearer: All right.

Cox: When I went to Paul and Gloria's for Thanksgiving--I took some pumpkin bread. Later Gloria called me up at home and said that she had taken some to school, and the teachers thought it was so good, they'd like the recipe. So I dictated the recipe to her over the phone.

This was Thursday morning, the day before they were leaving on a trip. I said, "I was going to call you up tonight to say bon voyage, but now that we've talked, I'll say it now and I won't call you this evening." So that was agreed.

Paul has retired and that Thursday was his last day at work. I had a feeling to call him up and not only wish him bon voyage but comment on his retirement, and then I said to myself, well, you told Gloria all that this morning, and you said you weren't going to call again, and I didn't call him.

Later in the evening he called me. It was partly to say goodbye, partly to report that he'd retired, partly to tell me to take good care of myself. He was going to be gone a month. So I thought it was too bad I hadn't let my intuition carry me along. Now, when I told this to Gladys, she said that was mental telepathy. [laughter]

Shearer: You were certainly on each other's minds.

Cox: Yes, whether it was or not. But it's too bad, you see, that I didn't take the initiative then. He didn't call me up until late in the evening, nearly bedtime. They were busy packing, and Gloria was trying to put stuff in his suitcase, and we joked about that because we've been together enough on trips to know that she's always expecting him to find room for her things in his suitcase. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Well, women pack more clothes.

Cox: But anyway, even now, even though I'm conscious of it, I have difficulty in giving away to intuition or whatever you want to call it.

Shearer: I think a lot of people, especially people who are academically trained, exceptionally intelligent, and do well rationally in planning and organizing sort of deal from that strength.

Cox: I'm a good organizer. I was reasonably good in math. I don't know. I never could have made a career of it, and I don't appreciate computers. [laughter] And, of course, my earlier experiences in the church. The Methodist church was a very emotional place, and they were always bringing in people and having camp meetings and all, you know, wanting you to become converted. For the life of me, I couldn't figure out what that meant! [laughter] I thought I was already living a moral and ethical life. So I was always (you see, at this point I was in my twenties, we'll say) holding back from an outside effort to sweep me off my feet, as it were, and that probably all reinforced my resistance to impulsive behavior.

When Will went to Manila and he joined the church, it was a union church and was not any particular denomination, and I'm sure he did it for social purposes. I don't know that he had much religious interest in it. But when he wrote home to me that he had joined the church, I felt he'd deserted me. I felt a real--well not resentment, just let down, because here there had been no discussion of our joining the church, and then he had gone there and joined one. Maybe I thought he'd done something on his own. [laughter] But I really felt badly about it.

Shearer: How did you feel when later you went to Manila and attended the church with him?

Cox: Well, there was no religious thought as far as I was concerned. It was just a Sunday morning out.

Shearer: But I mean did you still have the same feeling that he had given away a part of his allegiance to something you--?

Cox: No, because he didn't take any active part in the church, and he was not on the governing board or anything, and we only went occasionally. So the fact that he was a member was not an item at all when we were going there together. I don't know why [he joined]. Maybe somebody just twisted his arm. [chuckles] I don't know. I don't remember talking about it.

Shearer: I want to go back and ask you about the Bentley School.

Cox: In Berkeley they always had a nice program for Christmas, and while I was teaching there, and then in succeeding years for a number of years, my husband played Santa Claus because the children would never recognize his voice, you see. So we kept a casual acquaintance with them. We'd go over to call occasionally. I don't remember if we ever had them here, but we would go to call. He was Santa Claus here in the public schools for years, also. He insisted on having a good suit.

Shearer: A good Santa Claus suit.

Cox: A good Santa Claus suit. So they rented a suit, and he'd go around from one kindergarten to another, playing Santa Claus. Then children would see him driving around town in his Santa Claus suit and get a big kick out of that. One of his favorite stories was the child who wanted to sit on his lap, or got very close to him, and confessed he wasn't wetting his bed anymore. [laughter] Of course, being a father, he knew what to say to all these kids, aside from, "What do you want for Christmas?" He was always handing out fatherly advice, you know. The idea was that none of the children would recognize his voice, whereas if it was the principal or the janitor, you couldn't fool them.

Shearer: Yes, that's right.

## VII THE WORLD OF WORK: PAID AND VOLUNTEER

### Child Development Classes

- Shearer: Well, getting back to your child development work, I have a note here that you were asked to do this by a teacher at Mills. Mary Bennett--
- Cox: Mary Bennett Wood. She's retired and I think she's on the Bancroft Library board, but I never knew her really personally. Dr. Waggoner was the head of the department at that time.
- Shearer: And this was through the State Department of Education?
- Cox: No. This was the Child Development Center at Mills, and it was when I was in charge of the child-care centers in Alameda. We had a problem getting teachers so that we set up this in-service training, because in the '40s there was very little known about preschool--everybody thought of them as babysitting devices rather than an educational experience. Under Dr. Waggoner they had a demonstration school at Mills. A woman who was a graduate of Mills in early childhood education conducted these in-service training sessions for our own child-care center teachers here in Alameda.
- Shearer: When you started the child development classes it was 1932.
- Cox: That's right. I want to differentiate between "classes" and "workshops." The weekly sessions which I led and which usually lasted for twelve weeks, were called classes. As to workshops, on three occasions the state PTA was cosponsor of summer workshops. I had major responsibilities in organizing and conducting these workshops. Twice these were held at UC Davis and once at the University of the Pacific. These lasted a week or so, and teachers and other professionals were encouraged to attend.

The State Department of Education was also co-sponsor and was represented by Dr. Milton Babitz. The PTA took a great deal of responsibility in organizing and conducting these workshops.

Cox: A third type of participation was the weekly in-service training sessions which the parent education leaders attended. Mrs. Fanny Bulger organized these meetings, which were held in the Oakland School Department Building.

Shearer: In 1932 David was four years old. And at that time you--what?--started studying, reading, for your credential?

Cox: Well, I was taking a class in Alameda under a Mrs. [Isabel] Harris. She had as many classes as she wanted to handle. She was very popular. In fact, I could have been critical of her at one time. I thought there was some danger of her becoming a cult person, which I was determined never to do in my own [life]. I hope I didn't ever.

But she had an opportunity to establish a parent education class at the request of the PTA in Hayward. She didn't want to go that far out into southern Alameda County and they had me before they knew they weren't going to get her. That is to say, she manipulated it. She helped me get my credential, which was an emergency credential. You know, you can get an emergency credential without too much trouble and I had my A.B. Then after that to get a regular credential I had to take a required number of courses in methods and materials for adults. In order to renew the credential, I had to keep on taking units.

Shearer: When did you get your credential?

Cox: From the State Department of Education.

Shearer: And when was that?

Cox: In 1932.

Shearer: Oh, I see, all the same year.

Cox: Those Monday morning meetings that I mentioned at the Oakland School Department for in-service training were of a high enough level that they were accepted and I could use them for units.

Shearer: These seminars were on leading parent education classes on child development

Cox: Yes, because my credential was a special credential in parent education and child growth and development. Then later in addition to that I got one in classes for citizenship and English for the foreign born.

##

Shearer: What led you to consider working in this area of child development? It's because you felt you'd been tested on the ground?

Cox: It was the avenue that was open to me. I was very much interested in Mrs. Harris's class. Throw modesty to the winds; I was one of her star pupils, and she and I developed a rapport. When she didn't want to take this class in Hayward, she suggested that I take it. I'm interested in talking [laughter], witness--do I need to prove that? [laughter] I was interested in the subject matter, it gave me a chance to get away from home, and it was the avenue that came my way.

So she helped me get my credential. She gave me notes from her own notebook to get me by the first few weeks until I was able to begin to organize my own material or find out exactly what the group wanted. The only requirement the group there made was that they wanted someone who had an adolescent child, and my oldest child was twelve, so I qualified.

From then on, after that, I led classes in Oakland; I led a few classes in Alameda. It was when I had these classes in Oakland that Fanny Bulger organized the in-service training classes of which I have spoken. Other leaders like myself, who had classes in Oakland, Berkeley, attended. We had people in to speak to us or we assigned topics to ourselves for reports. We worked seriously to improve our skills.

Shearer: How did you manage these additional commitments? Did you have help at home?

Cox: It was then, as I said earlier, [a time when] I felt free to do this serious reading and let the dusting go because I felt that it was furthering what I was doing. Also, over the years and about this time, for a long time we had had a girl in the neighborhood who came to babysit. We kept her busy enough that she was willing to more or less restrict herself to us, because sometimes that's a problem, you know, that you call up at the last minute and the girl is not free. Marguerite was always available when we wanted her. By then I also had her come in an hour every evening to do the day's dishes--no automatic dishwashers in those days. So usually I did the breakfast dishes, but my husband came home for lunch all these years, and the children came home for lunch, so that there were many dishes. Marguerite came every evening for an hour to do the dishes, and on Fridays she stayed an extra hour and did the ironing.

Then later I had a woman, Mrs. Perata, who is still alive, and I go to see her occasionally. The boys are still very, very fond of her. She came and did the washing and ironing. Some days I would have two classes a day, and she would give the children their

Cox: lunch, and they admired her very much. I had every feeling that I was leaving them in capable hands. She came, oh, for years, I guess, until eventually she--by now the children were gone, and it came to the point where she was no longer interested in going out to work.

Then one time that I remember, when I still needed some more units for the credential, I took a course in psychology at Mills, and that was a delightful experience. The class was in the late afternoon.

Shearer: Who was the teacher? Do you remember?

Cox: I don't remember. That time of day was beautiful on the campus. I got a girl to come in and have dinner underway when I got home. Of course the children were older and I had to have things planned and would finish up when I got home. That was really a delightful experience! [laughter] It made me feel young again. (Much later, when my husband retired, I had a woman come in to clean. I still have someone come once a month.)

Shearer: What sort of women came to the classes that you led?

Cox: George Mann at that time, and later Gertrude Laws, were in the State Department of Education in adult education. In promoting their good works, they depended on the PTA to furnish the students. The state PTA\* encouraged and fostered this, and the local PTAs were urged to establish the classes, and then the school department hired the teacher.

Shearer: Teacher or leader, as you called it.

Cox: Leader, yes. And to begin with I got \$2.50 an hour. What is it now? \$7, \$8 or whatever. I got \$60 for the twelve sessions, two hours each.

Shearer: That's \$60 a week?

Cox: That was \$60 for the twelve sessions. Although the school department may have been skeptical about the classes, space was provided for the meetings, but no funds. So the PTA paid the \$60 for the first series of twelve sessions.

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\*California Congress of Parents and Teachers

Cox: Attendance records were kept, and the School Department received funds on the basis of the average daily attendance (ADA) at the end of the school year. They, thus, could pay for the class in subsequent years. The PTA was never reimbursed. (The class had to maintain a minimum attendance to avoid being closed.)

I had classes in Hayward. I had classes in San Leandro and Oakland. About the last class I had was at Centerville. That was at night.

Shearer: Did you find that the women in the classes were dealing [with] or troubled or excited and concerned about the same things that you had experienced in raising your own children?

Cox: Yes, yes. Some of the problems were serious, and if they were serious [pauses]--well, it was my philosophy and, I guess, all the rest [of the leaders] never to solve a problem for anybody, but whatever the topic was (sex education, obedience, whatever) to give the background, to give what writers said about the subject, to have some group discussion, but not to issue solutions. That is to say, people had to work them out themselves on the basis of the help or the information which you could give them, or go for professional help. We did not consider ourselves to be professional counselors. Of course what was then new theories of interpersonal relationship are now common knowledge, and the subject of fiction, TV dramas, etc.

I don't remember now whether the PTAs bought the books, but in every class we had a bookshelf, and class members took out these books. I don't remember all the topics now.

Then there was Cora Riser [spells name]. She was for a good many years a member of the Oakland Board of Education, she was also a member of the state PTA board, and she was interested in parent education. We did quite a bit of review or research together, as she could have the use of the facilities of the Oakland School Department. We previewed films. Those were the days of, you know, "The Troublesome Fours" and "The Naughty Fives." There's a whole series of them. We would view the films. The state PTA put out recommended reading lists and recommended films to be used in parent education classes or at parent education meetings.

Cora didn't drive, and in this area we--well, I won't say frequently, but it was not unusual that we would go together to PTA meetings throughout this geographical area. You know, the way the PTA is organized, local units are grouped into councils and then into districts.

# DOZEN MEN COMPLETING COURSE ON FAMILY LIFE PREPARATION



**WORKSHOP LEADERS**—Educational films on family life are discussed by Dr. Howard C. Buschling, San Francisco minister and marriage counselor, with two officers of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, co-sponsor with the College of the Pacific of the Family Life Education Workshop now in session on the campus. Mrs. William Cox, Alameda (center) is director of the parent education and family life department, and Mrs. Floyd Lewis of Chula Vista is homemaker director of the department. (Record photo)

## C.O.P. Class Believed 1st of Its Kind

By JAMES MORRISON  
A dozen men at College of the Pacific this week are completing a course of study which in most family circles is considered "mother's job," that of educating men and boys for family life.

They are part of a class of 43 who enrolled during the first summer session at the college in the third annual Family Life Education Workshop. The class is cosponsored by the California Congress of Parents and Teachers and the C.O.P. clinical services.

The 12 men for the most part are teachers or administrators in high schools and colleges of the state; most of the 31 women in the course are in the same general category. Others are PTA members, public health nurses and nursery school directors.

### REACTIONS JUDGED

That the course has been a success, for the men as well as the women, can be measured only by the reactions of the members, who seem to believe that the wide variety of ideas presented and dissected must indicate true value received in the 2 weeks of work now closing.

The 43 students in the workshop were under the supervision of Mrs. Fay Goleman, Stockton, lecturer in sociology and psychiatric social work consultant for the C.O.P. clinical services project.

Helping her in the task were Dr. Howard C. Buschling, San Francisco Methodist minister and marriage counselor, and Edna Gehlken, head of C.O.P.'s department of home economics and family living.

## GENERAL BELIEFS

In 2 weeks of study and mulling over the problems of the family in which men are most often the absent member in the children's waking hours, the workshop came up with these general beliefs:

In the nation's present culture, we make it almost impossible for men and adolescents to express their deep emotional feelings of tenderness and gentleness. Sentiment in men is suppressed, bringing about a loss in family relationship in which the father "all too often" must take the role of the shouting authoritarian.

The principal point of view expressed on military service and its effect on the maturing of young men is that "life in the armed services tends to make a man just what he was in civilian life—only more so." Service life "seems to intensify both the strengths and weaknesses in personality traits" and trends exhibited before induction.

## MORE GUIDANCE NEEDED

More special education and guidance for adolescent males appears to be needed, and "while the values of coeducation" are accepted as self-evident, "it is likely that boys also need more special direction" toward maturity of the physical and emotional being and toward finding their own identity as men.

If boys are to mature as physically and emotionally healthy men, they must associate with or have the example of healthy male adults. Too often, the "killing economic pressures" which beset fathers trying to make a living make this association impossible.

- Cox: Well, there are some thirty or so districts in the state. I did quite a bit of traveling when I was either a chairman or an officer, on the state board.
- Shearer: Now, what were some of the positions that you held? How did that work? You were a teacher or a leader of the adult education classes.
- Cox: That's right. For that I was paid by the local Board of Education.

### Sixteen Years on the State Board of the PTA

- Cox: I'm referring now to my volunteer work as a member of the board of the state PTA.

From the early thirties to 1940, I was active locally in the PTA--the local unit, Alameda Council, sixteenth district, holding various chairmanships. From 1940 to 1956, I served on the Board of Managers of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers. The first appointment was partly on a geographic basis. After that, it was "earned." A year or two after leaving the board, I was asked to undertake a special assignment. In this capacity, I visited colleges in the Bay Area, talking to students who were training to become teachers. The aim was to reach such students with information about the aims, objectives, and philosophy of the PTA before they were actually teaching. In this program I visited the college at Angwin, Dominican College near San Rafael, College of the Holy Names, Mills College, and UC Berkeley.

- Shearer: I see. When did you become a member of the board?
- Cox: In 1940. I was on the board for sixteen years. I left of my own volition. When I first went on the board, I saw all these oldtimers that had been on forever, and I decided, "Why not make way for youth?" After I'd been there sixteen years, I decided I was on the other end of the scale! [laughter]
- Shearer: This was the state board?
- Cox: The state board of the PTA. The state board consisted of the elected officers and a considerable number of appointed chairmen and the presidents of all these districts in the state.
- Shearer: That's quite a large board.
- Cox: So it was a board of fifty or sixty people. I first went on as program chairman, and I did well enough at that [chuckles] that before it was over I had served as both chairman and officer. I

Cox: was treasurer once, and financial secretary another time. I was director of education once, and I was director of home and family life. Those were elected officers. Then in between I served as chairman in various capacities. This covers the sixteen years.

Each director--like when I was director of education, who was one of the vice-presidents, there were a certain number of chairmen in that department, all relating to education.

Shearer: I see.

Cox: There were five or six vice-presidents with subject-matter-related chairmanships under their jurisdiction. A vice-president was really a supervisor of four or five chairmen, chairmanships which were related to the subject matter of the directorship.

Shearer: I see. So when you say that you were a director of education, you were also a vice-president in charge of education.

Cox: Yes, yes. I remember one instance which gave me satisfaction. It was customary to try to balance chairmanships geographically. One woman from Los Angeles who was suggested as a chairman was inexperienced and felt insecure. Over the year I was able to help her. I think at the end of the year she had really developed to where she felt comfortable in the position, whereas in the beginning she had been very unsure of herself. I really felt that I'd been helpful to her. So I had a few successes of that [kind].

I have said that the district presidents were members of the state board. They would ask state officers and chairmen to attend their district meetings. This would be at state expense. In this way, I traveled to a number of places throughout the state of California. It was really quite a broadening experience, including being stuck once in a snow-bound airport.

During this time, we often worked closely with the CTA, the California Teachers Association. Especially when they wanted to put an initiative on the ballot, they desired the cooperation or the support of the PTA. Another one of the vice-presidents and I stood out against them once. [laughter]

Shearer: What was the issue, and were you [successful]?

Cox: Well, they wanted us to endorse a certain proposal--an initiative measure they were promoting--immediately--and Martha and I were reluctant about it for ideological reasons. We said, "Well, we're not going to suggest at this board meeting that we endorse it." They replied, "Well, it has to be done immediately, or--" you know, Chicken Little. But we held out against them, although they were very persuasive and hesitant. Later the PTA did endorse the measure. [chuckles]

Cox: When the campaign began, we would not use their literature; we printed our own because we did not approve of the scare tactics which they were using. Their public relations people said, "The only way you'll get people to vote and all is to scare them," and we wouldn't go for that. We said, "With our membership, logical arguments--" well, maybe that was the emotion versus the intellect. But at any rate, we printed our own material and didn't circulate theirs.

#### Memorable PTA Colleagues

Shearer: Who were the people that you particularly admired and felt close to? Martha was one of them?

Cox: This was Martha Snowden. There are three or four of them that I still exchange Christmas cards with. [spells Martha Snowden] Her husband died within the last year. She was Mrs. Frank [Snowden]. And Mrs. Kenneth Spencer; I've already received a Christmas card from her this year.

Shearer: Did you use your "Mrs." names rather than your own names?

Cox: Well, we were very careful about that, because those of us who were on the executive committee (that is to say, the elected officers) met in advance of the board meetings, and there were ten or twelve of us. Of course, we got to know each other very well. But we agreed among ourselves that it was not appropriate in front of others to be calling ourselves by our Christian names when the rest of the board were "Mrs." So in front of everybody we were all "Mrs."

Shearer: What was Mrs. Kenneth Spencer's first name?

Cox: Beulah. They each later became presidents of the state PTA.

#### Eschewing the Opportunity for Presidency

Shearer: Did you ever become president?

Cox: No. There was a policy that the presidency would alternate, north and south in the state. One time when the presidency was to come to the north, one other woman was very anxious to be nominated by the board. Some of my friends came to me and said that if I wanted to

Cox: run they would help. I didn't do any politicking. I thought, if my name came up, okay, but I wasn't going to work to get it. The other woman did work to get the nomination by the board and she was elected at the convention.

Shearer: Why did you decide not to work?

Cox: Well, for one thing, I knew how badly she wanted it; and another thing, I didn't care that much; I wasn't sure I wanted it myself, though if it had come my way I would certainly have taken it. My financial status was not as good as some of the rest of these women whose husbands were professional men or who had bigger incomes than we did. Of course the state PTA paid traveling expenses, but there would have been personal expenses as well. I didn't dress as well as some of the others, for instance.

Shearer: Do you think it had any effect in the organization?

Cox: No, I don't think so. I was always neatly dressed and I felt I was [chuckles] attractive, and I had other qualities. So, no, I don't think that that [had any effect] because many of the district presidents would have been at about the economic level that I was, you see.

After this other woman became president, and the presidency wouldn't have come north for another four years, I decided to give up any thought of being president. I certainly wasn't interested enough to go out after it--of all the things I've been president of, I have never sought the office out. It has come my way. I don't care for positions of leadership enough to go out and get people working for [me]. I'm not politically minded, I guess. [chuckles] If it falls my way, I'm pleased and honored and I do it, but I--so I never was president.

Another woman with whom I'm still in contact is Helen Williams. She and I worked together a great deal. She still lives in Turlock. We alternated positions for about four years, I guess. Each of these jobs was a two-year job.

Shearer: I see. Including the vice-presidencies?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: How many times were you vice-president?

Cox: [pauses] I'd have to figure it out.

Shearer: Several times.

Cox: Yes.

## PHOTO CAPTIONS

Top: The founding Board of Directors of Bay Area Educational Television Association, which later became KQED. Left to right (seated): C.M. Walter, attorney; Dr. Vaughn D. Seidel, Superintendent of Alameda County Schools; Mrs. William Cox, director of education, California Congress of PTA; and Deforest Hamilton, director of education, Sonoma County Schools. (standing): R. A. Isberg, consulting engineer; Frederick Glover, assistant to the president, Stanford University; Dr. George Pettitt, assistant to the president, University of California; Dr. George Gibson, assistant to the president, San Francisco State; Dr. James Williams, deputy superintendent, Richmond Public Schools; and Dr. Edward Redford, assistant superintendent, Secondary Schools, San Francisco. June 5, 1952.

Bottom: Mr. and Mrs. Cox at a retirement party to honor Mrs. Cox's sixteen years on the Board of Directors of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers. 1956.





Shearer: What did you find was a particular frustration in working in an organization such as the PTA?

Cox: I didn't find any particular frustrations. It was excellent training, presiding at meetings, speaking in public, organizing materials. At conventions I found I could preside and hold the attention of a group--as many as five hundred people in a conference. Sometimes we'd put on "how not to do it" skits and things. I found that I could control an audience and keep their interest. I think I've mentioned that before. Then I enjoyed these contacts away.

In thinking back, say, male/female, in this relationship we met with a reasonable number of men (school superintendents or men in the educational field and/or in the CTA) and there was never any thought that I knew of there of any difference between men and women; that is, we were all doing the same thing, and there was no thought that men were superior to women. We all treated each other as equals.

Shearer: At that time you were not involved in any salaried position with PTA? It was only in being a leader of the child development workshops--

Cox: That's right.

Shearer: And then you went on to the volunteer--?

#### Teaching English as a Second Language

Cox: Well, then I for many years taught the English for the foreign-born, now known as English as a second language, and the citizenship classes here in Alameda. I was paid for that.

Shearer: When did you do that? You've done that for a long time, haven't you?

Cox: I did that for about thirty years.

Shearer: Oh, my word. From the forties to--

Cox: From the forties to the early seventies.

Shearer: How many classes a week did you give?

Cox: One class in English and one class in citizenship in Alameda Evening School, so it was two nights a week. I was doing some of this concurrently with my state PTA volunteer work. There was a high

Cox: school teacher here--Grace Powers--who had been a teacher to some of my children, and I knew her more or less personally. She always took my classes when I was gone on PTA meetings. We had agreed on that with the principal of the evening school. I went to some effort for that. I would take the lesson plans to her and either go collect them afterward or she'd leave them at the office for me, so that I felt justified in going away when it was the same person who was substituting for me every time. I was also active in the local adult education teachers group.

As the students in the class for citizenship passed their examinations, they were encouraged to return to class to describe their experiences. This gave them recognition, encouraged those still in the class, and gave me an idea of what questions were asked most often. During the years I had the class, some five hundred persons became new citizens.

Shearer: How many nights a week were you out? You really had a very, very active community and professional involvement.

#### Leadership in the Red Cross

Cox: Well, these classes were two nights a week. The years I was on the Red Cross board--that's a night board meeting. [pauses] What else? [chuckles]

Shearer: Well, League of Women Voters more recently, too.

Cox: Well, yes, but that's within the last few years.

Shearer: Were you doing the Red Cross at the same time that you were doing PTA and the teaching?

Cox: Well, I'd have to remember now and check dates. I was for a number of years on the Board of Directors of the Alameda Chapter of the American National Red Cross, serving on bylaws, finance, and personnel committees. Of course, many organizations have a limit to the number of years you can serve; it's usually two terms of three years each or something similar. They can get around that restriction by the next time electing you as an officer, and they say that breaks-- [doorbell rings]

Shearer: Breaks the continuity of the--

Cox: Breaks the continuity. Then you get another six years again.

Shearer: I see. So they don't lose all your good experience.

# Mrs. William Cox, Marie Mullen receive awards at dinner

The election of new board members, the presentation of special awards, and the installation of officers highlighted the annual dinner of Alameda Chapter, American National Red Cross at the Officers' Club of Naval Air Station, Alameda.

Edward S. Harrison presided at the dinner, which was attended by over 150 volunteers and supporters of Red Cross.

Speaking briefly was Mayor Terry LaCroix Jr., who praised the work of the Alameda Chapter, pointing out that it is well organized in case of emergency because of its dedicated volunteers and its "crazy" director. He also commended the chapter for its successful blood drives.

A special volunteer award was presented to Mrs. William H. Cox by Lee Avera, chairman of the dinner. The plaque praised her for continuous assistance to the America Red Cross, for her dedication and guidance to the administration, love and devotion to the many volunteers and for superior service. She also was presented with the terrarium.

Another special gift — a silver wine cooler — was presented to Marie Mullen, chairman of volunteers by Martha Killebrew, executive director, who laughingly told

Mrs. Mullen to "cool it." Elected to new three year terms on the board, were Jerome Bouchard, John Darns, George Gardiner, Ray Johnson, Arline Martin, Brian McDonald, Paul Nelson, Robert Osmond, Russell Palmer, Marayat Parker, Robert Pries and Josephine Wren.

Elected for two year terms were John Beery, Don Oransky and William Parker, and for a one year term, Aquilino Corpus, Adeline Cox.

Harrison was reelected chairman of the chapter. Also reelected were Larry Bergeron, first vice chairman; Jean Avera, second vice chairman; Lee Allegretti, secretary, with Duane Anderson elected as new treasurer, and Finis Gillespie as assistant treasurer.

Honorary members of the board are Clyde Connell, Valerie Hacke, Charles Harris, and Captain E.D. McKellar Jr. Among the special guests introduced were two former chairman of volunteers, Valerie Hacke and Ismay Hope, and former executive director Lelia Burton.

Everett Fisher, past chairman, installed the officers and board members for the 1975-76 year.



A SPECIAL Red Cross volunteer award was presented to Mrs. William Cox (left), during the annual dinner of the Alameda Chapter, Red Cross. With her are Edwin S. Harrison, who was reelected chapter chairman, and Mayor Terry LaCroix, who praised the Red Cross for its work.

Cox: Yes, or they don't bring in new people--either way you want to look at it. [tape off while Mrs. Cox answers doorbell]

I am now on a standing committee for the Red Cross--community services. In the late sixties, the Red Cross organized the Friendly Visitor Service. I took the required course and was assigned to a "friend." She was a shut-in, and I called on her weekly for several years. Her health deteriorated and she finally died in 1973. After a brief "vacation," I became a charter member of the Alameda Meals on Wheels program and up to the present I am delivering meals to shut-in, frail or elderly people on Friday. Over the years, I have had a number of drivers, but I have had the same driver now for some time. With her husband, herself, and myself, we rarely have to call for a substitute.

Shearer: You are also the secretary of the League of Women Voters of Alameda?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: And that interruption at the door was to take delivery of the minutes?

Cox: Well, I type up the minutes with all my errors, and then they go to somebody else to be duplicated and sent out to the board members with an agenda for the next meeting, which means that the minutes don't have to be read at the board meeting. It saves quite a bit of time, you see, and everybody has a copy. But then I make such a fuss about getting the original back, because I don't want to put a mimeographed copy in the files, that she brought it right back. [laughter]

#### Meshing PTA Activities With Family Life

Shearer: Well, I want to just hover on this PTA organizational activity just a little bit longer to ask you, since you had such a heavy involvement at this time, not only in the PTA but in the teaching classes, how did this sit with your family life, with your husband?

Cox: Well, by the forties, my children were pretty well along. Bill would have been out of college by now. Paul--

Shearer: --five years younger, would be in high school?

Cox: [pauses] Well, I was on the board from 1940 to 1956. But, of course, the first four years or so, until they found out, you know [laughter] that I was capable--you're tempting me, you know, not to be modest--I didn't have so many of these outside commitments. It would be

Cox: board meetings every two months, and they alternated, San Francisco and Los Angeles. By then, my son Bill was married and living in southern California and had children. I always was able to spend the rest of the weekend with them, so that it made a family visit. On one occasion, I took my mother with me to visit. The grandchildren were small then. Because of the color of our robes, they called us the "Blue Grandma" and "Green Grandma." By then my children were old enough that I felt I could do this, you see, and my husband was completely supportive. He didn't ever object to any of these things. Of course, by then I was not slacking up [chuckles] in my duties here, either.

Shearer: You got some help here, didn't you?

Cox: Well, the children were big enough and I left food or they went out. I could have meatloaf or stew or something in the house.

In those days I traveled by train and went down on the night train and could catch the train over here at Fruitvale station. Will used to take me over for the evening train and then meet me in the morning at the train. He was completely supportive of all of that; he didn't resent any of that, so far as I know.

### A Sense of Sisterhood

Shearer: Were there any people in the organization of the PTA that you found particularly admirable, that you would have liked to emulate either in their way of handling people or organizational duties?

Cox: I admired many of the professional people I met. I think I said before that this was the period of my life when I was meeting with, working with, women who had college backgrounds, which had not happened to me locally here before. That's different now with the League of Women Voters. Practically all the women with whom I am working with in the League of Women Voters are younger than I. They are college women and perhaps have been professional women, perhaps hoping to go back to work outside the home but they now have small children, you see. Some are now working, so we hold some evening meetings. This girl that just came has small children. [pauses] Where am I now? [remembers asked question] Oh, to emulate. They were all very capable. To that degree I thought we were on a par.

My speaking ability--I could do as well as they. I learned enough parliamentary procedure. If I had ever been state PTA president, I would have had to be more skilled in parliamentary procedure than I am. But there was one woman who is very active in

Cox: in parent education--was. I don't know what she does now. We still correspond some. She was of a superior caliber, I think, to most of the rest of us. Her name was Sylvia Bogen.

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Cox: While I say that I enjoy being with women with a college background, I hope that I am not in any way sounding undemocratic or snobbish. I hope that I don't show any sense of superiority. I deal with many women whom I admire, and I think they admire me, and we are very different in our backgrounds. But there is sort of a sisterhood, I think, among people who have had common experiences or have had perhaps deeper intellectual experiences than women who have not gone to college. But while I say I enjoy that, I think it does not mitigate against my enjoying or having companionship with other women who have not had that experience.

#### Enhancing Citizens' Influence

Cox: I think the reason I enjoy the League of Women Voters, the reason I joined Common Cause and the Cousteau Society, and that I enjoyed the PTA work, is that as a citizen I feel less helpless when I am contributing to an organization in which I have confidence and faith and in which I feel I have some influence.

The PTA, I think, has a very great influence, and the League of Women Voters does in state legislatures and with other professional groups, because they are known to make a study of things. They don't have axes to grind. As far as the PTA is concerned, it's the welfare of children and young people; and as far as the League is concerned, it's citizenry; and Common Cause, of course. So I think my gravitation to those organizations has been because civically or politically you feel so helpless unless you're at least contributing financially to a group in which you have confidence and respect.

Shearer: Yes, that certainly takes it out of the realm of simply--

Cox: I haven't had any political ambitions, or I haven't wanted to go into politics or anything of that kind.

Shearer: But you haven't shied away from leadership positions in the organizations.

## Church Women United to 2/7/77 hear speaker

"Life in a Shrinking World" will be the subject of Mrs. William H. Cox of the League of Women Voters when she speaks at the meeting of Church Women United tomorrow at 10 a.m. in the First Christian Church, San Jose and Park Avenues.

She will tell about the need of the proper use of land, solid wastes, water and energy, and telling ways of promoting an environment beneficial to life through the wise use of resources in the public interest. Her talk will be based on current materials of the League of Women Voters prepared for their study program.

Mrs. Russell E. Palmer will preside at the business meeting, which will include reports and announcements.

Mrs. Don Dutcher of Trinity Lutheran Church will give the devotional, and Mrs. Donald Sager of the Court Street United Methodist Church will introduce the speaker.

## Land use topic for ECW's Lunch, meet

"Our Planet — Are There Limits?" will be the topic of Mrs. William H. Cox when she is guest speaker at the meeting of the Episcopal Church Women of Christ Church tomorrow in the parish hall.

A 9:45 a.m. board meeting will be followed by Holy Communion, the business meeting, program and luncheon, according to Mrs. David Appleton and Mrs. Donald Payne, co-chairmen of ECW.

Miss Dolores Saum will introduce the speaker, who will discuss the proper uses of land, wastes, water and energy. A native of Alameda, Mrs. Cox is a past president of the Adelpian Club, a member of the League of Women Voters, board member of Alameda Chapter, American National Red Cross, as well as serving as historian for the Alameda Hospital Auxiliary.

Members of St. Mary's Guild will be hostesses for the luncheon. Mrs. Jack Daniels is Guild chairman.

More on the PTA Presidency

Cox: No, no. The PTA is one of the few organizations to which I've belonged that I've never wound up as president. [laughter] In the local unit I was asked several times to be president, and at that time my children were small, and I didn't see that it was possible. Now, whether that was an exaggerated point of view, I'm not here to say. In most of the other organizations that I've belonged to, I've become president.

Shearer: And you've told me already, I guess, the reasons why you didn't end up as president of the PTA, because of the ambitions of the--

Cox: Well, yes.

When I was asked to become PTA district president, I was already on the state board as a chairman, and I was afraid to accept the district presidency for two years and perhaps not get back on the board, so that was a selfish--

Shearer: Why was it more desirable to be on the state board?

Cox: Because that's what I enjoyed.

Shearer: That would have allowed you the mobility and the broader contact?

Cox: I would have had more responsibilities maybe locally, but on the other hand I had held district chairmanships and so on, so I did a lot of work locally in the district.

I was at a convention, paying my own way, when the state president (and I don't know how this happened) asked me if I would accept a chairmanship. I telephoned home to my husband and said that I had been offered this chairmanship, and he said, "Well, go ahead," so I accepted it. Then I found that I enjoyed it very much. But I figured I'd rather stay on the board than go off and take a chance on getting back. So several times with the PTA it was my decision not to become president.

Shearer: What particularly appealed to you about being on the state board?

Cox: The influence, the prestige, the wider range of influence, more interesting contacts with the state people--not only state PTA people but people in the State Boards of Health and Education and superintendents of schools (city and county). I met a wider range of people. So from that standpoint it was partly a selfish reason. I could only hope I also contributed.

Shearer: Did any of the connections that you forged in the PTA organization continue in strictly social terms?

Cox: Really no, my contacts were chiefly in the PTA. These women that I've mentioned lived in southern California, for instance. At the present time I'm friendly with a few former PTA associates, who live in Alameda. Although I'm older than they are, age makes less difference from sixty-five, say, to eighty-five than it did from forty-five to sixty-five. I still see some of these women, and some of them belong to the Adelpian Club.

#### Reviewing Books for the Adelpian Club

Cox: The Adelpian Club of Alameda is a women's social club, to which one is elected to membership. I joined in 1933. I was growing tired of home and child care. My youngest child was in school mornings. Fortunately, the drama section in which I was interested met in the morning. By 1940, I was asked to hold an office, but my CCPT activity prevented me from giving consistent time to another organization. I was president of the Adelpian Club from 1960 to 1962 and I am still active.

Shearer: Is that the one you referred to earlier as the women's group?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Now a women's group often means a mutual emotional support group. I assume that's not what it is.

Cox: No. The Adelpian Club, which has been in existence since 1896 or so, and it was in its day--originally it was a member of the California Federation of Women's Clubs. During the war, in the forties, I guess, they dropped out of the federation because it was so difficult to keep up with the requirements of traveling to meetings and so on. That was a disappointment to me because I'm very organization-minded.

I see these women, and we sometimes reminisce, but I don't play bridge and I don't belong to one of the book review groups where somebody comes and reviews books. Those meetings are held in private homes, and I'm not involved chiefly because of lack of interest. I'm the one that gives the book reviews, for free!

Shearer: What book are you reviewing now?

Cox: Well, I don't know. I've got to do one in January, but I haven't decided yet on the book.

Shearer: What are you reading now that you enjoy?

Cox: I'm not reading any fiction at the moment. I recently finished a spy story given me by my grandson at Christmas.

Shearer: That means that you're reading because you feel you ought to?

Cox: No. I'm way behind on the daily papers and house organs of all these organizations to which I belong. I read very little fiction, so I don't very often review fiction.

Shearer: What kind of books do you review generally?

Cox: Well, I reviewed Mildred's The Right to Be People. I would have to think of other titles. It's never a best-seller because I don't keep up with current literature. It's books that come to my attention or that I have myself. I'm toying with the idea of the Garcia Lorca biography. An article about him was in the paper lately. [finds clipping] Here is the clipping from the pink sheet in the Sunday paper [November 2, 1980] about Garcia Lorca. [hands interviewer clipping]

Once Ruth sent me the autobiography of Angus L. Bowmer, who started the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, and I reviewed that. I just do it for the Adelphian Club. They can't afford to hire people you know, [laughter] so they have to take advantage of the "freebies."

Shearer: I'll bet they're very glad to get you. Were you ever in the Junior League?

Cox: No.

Shearer: Why not the Junior League?

Cox: So far as I know, there is no Junior League in Alameda, and for the most part, I think they are of a higher economic class than I would be. And of course, now I would be beyond the age limit, as I understand it.

Shearer: What about the American Association of University Women?

Cox: It has taken me a long time to join the AAUW. About the time I graduated from college, my Aunt Jessie took me to a meeting, which I think must have been the AAUW. At that time, I was not interested in joining any organization.

Cox: Then when I was so active in the PTA, I did not have much time for other groups. It is difficult to participate in several organizations because of the conflict in dates. After I left the CCPT board, it was a little time before people realized that I had more leisure. I received an invitation to an AAUW meeting--a promotional type of gathering--and I went. I didn't catch a spark and they did not follow up on it. Their emphasis at that time was on women's rights or equal status of women, and I figured that I had gotten beyond that, in my own experience. This may have been shortsighted of me, considering the ERA struggle and all.

About this time, a friend who was active in the League of Women Voters urged me to join the League, and I did so, and have become active in that organization, in study groups and as discussion leader. After we formed a league in Alameda, I served on the board--two years as secretary and two years as publications chairman. Of course, this was all in my middle years, as earlier I had been busy with the family and later the PTA.

Quite recently, however, several friends have urged me to join the AAUW, and I have decided to submit an application. Perhaps I can attend some of the meetings of the local group, but at present, I do not anticipate becoming really active.

If you'll turn off the machine, I'll tell you I never joined the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] either! [chuckles]

Shearer: Don't you want your grandchildren to know why?

Cox: [laughter] Let them guess!

#### Recognition for Community Contributions##

[Interview 4: February 12, 1981]

Shearer: I see you're been doing your homework. What do you have to show me?

Cox: I've been going through the files. This is when I was an air raid warden. [shows interviewer certificate] For some reason which I never understood, I was the only woman that I knew of that had been asked to do that. I was a neighborhood air [raid warden]. We took regular courses, you know, one thing and another, and went around on occasion to see that everybody had their black curtains up and that no light was shining through.

Shearer: How large was your area of responsibility?

# in the <sup>ALAMEDA</sup> Times Star Social Whirl

BARBARA STEVENSON  
WOMEN'S EDITOR

PAGE 4

Wednesday, September 18, 1974

## A Woman in the Spotlight

(Editor's note: This is another article in the series on outstanding Alameda women, selected by Alameda Branch of the American Association of University Women, in preparation for the international observance of 1975 as "The Year of the woman.")

Contributing to community services through volunteer activities is a very rewarding experience, giving more to the donor than to the recipient, according to Adeline (Mrs. William H.) Cox.

As with so many other women with young children, her activities started with PTA work on the local level. This culminated with 16 years on the Board of Managers of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, and in recognition of her outstanding contribution to PTA, she is the recipient of honorary life memberships from both the California and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. During this time she was a member of the Board of Directors which incorporated the Bay Area Educational Television Association (KQED).

In the early '30's, Mrs. Cox qualified for a teachers credential in adult education, and spent nearly 40 years as a part time teacher in this field. She was a leader in parent education classes, and later taught English for the Foreign Born (now known as English as a Second Language) and citizenship classes. Several hundred students in these classes later passed the U.S. examination and became nat-



ADELINE COX  
A busy volunteer

turalized citizens. In recognition of her work in adult education, Mrs. Cox was invited to become an honorary member of Delta Kappa Gamma, an honor society for women educators.

At this time she also was active in the (then) Alameda Council of Camp Fire Girls, serving as its president and chairman of various committees. She also was on the board of the Travelers Aid Society.

For a number of years, Mrs. Cox has served on the board of directors of Alameda Chapter, American Red Cross, serving as secretary and treasurer, as well as on a number of committees, including Service to

Military Families. At present she is assisting with the Meals on Wheels program, delivering meals one day a week.

A major interest at present is the League of Women Voters. She has served on study committees, as a discussion leader, and as a member of the speakers' bureau.

"To me one of the satisfactions in both PTA and LWV work is the sense of unity one has with an organization with whose objectives one can identify," Mrs. Cox said. "You lose that helpless feeling of being just an individual citizen and voter."

Mrs. Cox is a member of the Alameda Hospital Auxiliary,

serving as historian, and is a past president of the Adelphian Club. She also has done her share of "doorbell ringing" for many worth causes.

Mrs. Cox is a native Alamedan and a third generation Californian — her great grandfather arrived in Sacramento from Michigan in 1849.

She is a graduate of Alameda schools and holds an AB degree from the University of California. She is the mother of three sons, grandmother of five and great grandmother of one.

All three sons were Eagle Scouts and are graduates of the University of California. Three of her granddaughters have now graduated from college and are beginning professional careers; the fourth is a high school student. Her grandson is a senior at the U.C. Berkeley and will spend the next six months on an archeological "dig" in Parkistan.

Mrs. Cox notes that she has been well aware over the years that community service which necessitates being absent from home calls for an understanding and cooperative husband. She had that support from her husband, the late William H. Cox, who also was active in local affairs. He was for many years an employee of the Alameda Unified School District, with professional interests in that field. He was active in Boy Scouts, the Alameda Kiwanis Club and Masonic affiliations and was very interested in the ex-

Cox: Oh, just around this neighborhood. I forget. Six or eight--I don't know how many blocks around. The man next door was one, and I forget who the others were. We were never to leave town or be away for certain periods of time without checking in with each other. I never had any dramatic experiences of any kind, but we had to go however many hours to take this training. We didn't wear helmets or anything, but I think we had flashlights and, I suppose, arm bands.

Shearer: Was training administered through the Red Cross?

Cox: No, it was through the Civil Defense Office. It was not the CPR the way it is practiced now, but some type of resuscitation and rules about blackouts.

Every Wednesday, every other month, I go to one of the senior centers to lead a discussion group, and I've been doing that about as long as I've been doing Meals on Wheels on Fridays.

Shearer: What are your discussions on?

Cox: As it turns out, it's not a discussion group in the classic sense. We don't have a discussion leader and we don't assign topics. I think of it more as a current events [discussion]. Some of the participants are sharp and some of them aren't. It's more structured than a true discussion group would be, because I go prepared with current events items. If they want to chime in, all right, or if they have things to discuss. It's more a sort of a free-for-all than a real discussion group.

Shearer: And how long have you been doing this?

Cox: About the same length of time as I've been delivering Meal on Wheels, about eight years. I'm amazed myself [laughter] at how long that is.

Shearer: And that would be 1973 to--

Cox: To current. This isn't my month to go.

And then I'm a member of Delta Kappa Gamma. It's a national honorary society for women educators.

Shearer: That's right. And you received this--

Cox: That's a certificate of membership.

Shearer: --as an honorary member?

Cox: I am an honorary member, yes.

Shearer: And this was in--

Cox: Nineteen seventy-one. I was amazed again that it was that long ago. [laughter] They have, oh, monthly meetings and I go as often as I can. I have participated occasionally with League of Women Voters material, and I reported on my trip to China. Then, the last meeting, I had read all the books we were supposed to read.

Then Camp Fire is off on a Roots binge. [laughter] They've been an organization for seventy years and they've been looking up oldtimers. I got this recently. [shows interviewer twenty-five-year certificate from Camp Fire]

Shearer: How did you happen to participate in Camp Fire when you had three boys?

Cox: [laughter] Because I got roped in. I never worked with the girls. I was always on the council level in administrative capacity.

My boys were active in the Boy Scouts. At that time (about 1935) there was no place for women in the Boy Scout organization. Cub Scouts and den mothers were just being organized, but none of the Cox boys was a Cub Scout.

In the early fifties, a friend of mine who had a daughter in Camp Fire suggested my name to the nominating committee for a position on the Alameda Council (now combined in the Alameda Contra Costa Council). I served for several years in various chairmanships and was president in the sixties. My husband was also president.

Shearer: This certificate just was awarded to you, January 31 of 1981.

Cox: This year. They had a tea over in Danville for all of this area. They had a program, and they had tea and food. They gave certificates on a twenty-five- and fifty-year participation. I don't qualify for the fifty, but I qualify for more than the twenty-five. I go back about forty years.

#### Why Not the DAR?

Shearer: One thing I wanted to ask you--your last comment of our last interview was, "If you'll turn off the tape recorder, I'll tell you why I didn't join the DAR," and then you never did tell me. Now, I think that might be worth having on tape!

Cox: [laughter] Well, I have good friends who belong to the DAR, but I just can't stand that type of patriotic exclusiveness. I think one of the things, of course, that upset me long ago was--who was it they wouldn't let sing in Constitution Hall?

Shearer: Was it Marian Anderson?

Cox: Yes, one of the black singers. I believe later they did allow her. But they're just too conservative and too far to the right, and I don't see all this--well, I know my ancestors; I can trace them back to the 1700s in this country and all, and that's interesting to know. But the DAR and the SAR are too far to the right for me. [laughter] I've always been afraid some of my friends would ask me to join and I'd have to come up with the answer! [laughter] Maybe they just know me well enough! I have a friend who is active in the DAR and who has held several offices. She's going back to New Orleans pretty soon because they're going to have a special tour of some of these old houses in Natchez.

Shearer: Actually, that might be a trip worth taking. It would be fun to see those.

Cox: Well, one time when my friend McNutt and I went on a trip with the Alameda Travelers to New Orleans and on the Delta Queen, we stopped at Natchez. After you've been through about eight of those houses [laughter], you know, if you're not into antiques, which I am not, they're just one after the other.

That really upset me anyway, that trip, because all that opulence and all that silver and beautiful glassware and imported rugs and all the rest--I couldn't get over the feeling that that was all built on slave labor, and it just upset me to see all that elegance so long ago.

#### Parent Education Efforts

Shearer: What were some issues of child raising that came up in your work in parent education workshops.

Cox: Yes. Now, I want to clear up the use of that word. There were several different types of instruction. The classes that I had were adult education classes. Then, there were workshops sponsored by the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, the CCPT--summer workshops of several days' duration at UC Davis. Another sponsoring organization would have been the State Department of Education, and the man who was very active was Dr. Milton Babitz, now deceased. [spells name] His wife still lives in the Sacramento area. He was the chief of--whatever his exact title was--head of parent education in the State Department of Education.

Cox: So the State Department of Education, and the state PTA, and I wouldn't remember now what other organization there might have been, sponsored two different summer workshops at UC Davis where we provided speakers, where we were on the planning committee, where we did the groundwork and the organizing, where the PTA offered scholarships for teachers to attend. The basis of this was to have PTA people in administrative, top-level positions, and also teachers come to these workshops to learn more about such topics as parent education in general, about sex education in the schools and similar topics.

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Cox: What was then the College of the Pacific at Stockton, now the University of the Pacific, also sponsored several summer workshops where they would bring leading parent education personnel (enthusiasts, I was going to say) to head up the workshops. The PTA was expected or did participate to the extent of sending students (that is, participants) and perhaps also chairing certain of the sessions, and I took part in those at the time that I was the vice-president with the state PTA in charge of parent education. So those were workshops, where these others, the day-by-day classes where I was the leader, were just adult education classes in the public schools.

Shearer: I see.

Cox: Then those were the days when all of what is now generally understood as group discussion techniques were being developed--brainstorming, with discussion leaders, moderators, recorders, with consensus instead of majority/minority reports. Consensus is where nobody is happy. [laughter] Then, in those days, it was--I tried for days to remember this name and it finally came to me. Bethel. Bethel, Maine, was where all of this started, this group discussion business, and if you hadn't been to Bethel [chuckles], you know, you weren't with it. I finally got to Bethel on a vacation when we drove through. I'm sure if I looked, I'd have some of that original material, because all of that type of conducting discussions or conducting educational work was new. Babitz, for instance--maybe he'd been to Bethel. I don't know. Anyway, he was very good at it.

We would train our own state PTA people, and I got this [prize] one time for being willing to be the goat; that is to say, with leading the discussion in front of the group and being willing to be criticized for my performance. A demonstration, you see. And because they were pleased with my willingness, the board gave me that. [shows interviewer paper holder]

Shearer: That's a little dog paper holder, like a bedspring.

Cox: Yes. Oftentimes people are too self-conscious to be willing to take part in a demonstration and then accept the criticisms; or to deliberately do something wrong in order to bring out a point.

Shearer: To take that risk. But that didn't pose any problem to you?

Cox: Well, I didn't especially like it [chuckles], but, no, I'm willing to do that.

### The Issue of Sex Education in the Schools

Shearer: You mentioned that sex education was one of the issues that was raised at the workshops.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Sex education in the schools, that is.

Cox: Yes. That situation or that problem hasn't been worked out to date. There are still schools that are reluctant and parents that are reluctant. In those days, there was very little material and there were practically no teachers who were comfortable with the subject.

Shearer: Which group was promoting the idea of the sex education in schools?

Cox: Well, the PTA saw the advantage, and I guess the State Department of Education was, too. I'm a little vague about that now. Perhaps some mental health groups, too.

Sometimes it's a little interesting to wonder how far we've gotten, when I think [chuckles] that the problems that we were trying to solve forty years ago are still on the active list. People are still not happy about a lot of this planning.

Shearer: That's right. What was your position on that subject?

Cox: Personally?

Shearer: Yes.

Cox: Well, I thought that I was forward looking and progressive. One of the things that annoyed me very much, after I thought I had been so frank or willing to talk with my own children and all, [was] that then some of my sons said all they ever learned about sex they'd learned at Boy Scout camp [laughter], and after I'd tried so hard. Well, there were books. I would bring books home and leave them around for the boys to read, and I'd find them going like this [gestures], you know, when I'd walk into the room. [laughter]

Shearer: Even though they knew that you had left [the books], they still would cover them up?

Cox: Yes. They'd, you know, feel awkward or embarrassed about it.

Shearer: Did you actually have discussions with them too?

Cox: I don't recall that we ever sat down or any--but certainly, yes, I'm sure we answered questions frankly. I remember being what I thought [was] very advanced, explaining to them about menstruation, because my husband was married before he knew about menstruation. He thought you went in the bathroom once and that was it! [laughter]

Shearer: My word! [laughter]

Cox: So it's really hard for people like you to realize what it was like in what Ruth calls "the olden days." [laughter] There were parents who were willing to be forward looking but who needed help in techniques because they themselves, in their own childhood, had not had that relationship with their parents, and even if they wanted to talk to children they felt embarrassed. The idea of the PTA, really, or other groups, was to begin with children before they got to the teenage stage where their emotions became involved, but when they were young and would take it on the factual basis without being tied in emotionally, as happens when they finally discover there's another sex.

Perhaps I said that one of my friends in Oakland was a member of the Oakland Board of Education and therefore had access to the filming rooms where we could go, and she was also on the state board. She and I spent hours over at the Oakland School Department previewing films to be put on the recommended list by the PTA and used in parent education classes or meetings.

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[comments after the conclusion of taped sessions]

Cox: I don't remember if I told you that I was one of the founding "fathers" of KQED. Vaughn Seidel, the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools, was active in the organization of the Bay Area Educational TV Association. He was a friend of ours and knew of my CCPT activities. He hoped to have PTA financial support, although I had assured him that the CCPT did not have that kind of money. At any rate, I was asked to become a member of the founding board of directors in 1952. I continued to attend board meetings for a time after leaving the PTA board in 1956.

Both Will and I were involved in another community activity--the Alameda Youth Center. In the forties, many communities attempted to establish youth centers. These were drop-in centers, apart from

Cox: the city recreation departments. The centers were to be "run" by the youths themselves, with a paid adult director, and overall supervision by an adult council. For several years Will and I were active on the adult council. This involved finding a site, raising funds, and so forth. The city of Alameda paid the salary of the adult supervisor for a time. We spent a good many hours in this activity, and I am still in touch with the first supervisor (at that time a recent graduate of Mills College). The center finally closed when the city took on more such activities in the city parks in 1962.

I also served on the board of Travelers Aid. This was a countywide organization, but they tried to select board members from the various areas in the county. I, thus, represented the City of Alameda, but was chosen by a nominating committee, not officially by the city. This was in the fifties, and I served as long as the bylaws allowed (two terms of three years each). Mrs. Walter Gordon was a member at the same time when there was still some resistance to blacks, and I always wondered whether her comment that she "already had lunch" was valid.

#### Black Representation in Volunteer Organizations

Shearer: Can you elaborate on that observation. Were these luncheon meetings?

Cox: Well, she always came to the meetings but she never ate lunch with us. I wondered if she were trying to make it easy on the rest of us. It just seemed odd that she always had just eaten. The Athens Club was in downtown Oakland, where we met. She was certainly allowed in and sat in the room with us. And at the table, too. But she never drew up a chair and was served.

Shearer: Did you sense any feeling against her because of her color, or against blacks in general:

Cox: No, I didn't. This was a national organization and a county organization (not Berkeley or Alameda). And I didn't know her really, either. Not personally. Only the history of Mr. Gordon as a protege of Governor Warren, as a football player, and as governor himself of the Virgin Islands. This was the fifties. I just figured she was the token black.

Shearer: Were blacks represented in other volunteer organizations, the PTA, for instance?

Cox: I remember when we had a state convention in San Diego, the black delegates from Alameda County (the 16th District, which included Berkeley and Oakland) had to stay at the YWCA, instead of the hotel the rest of us (whites) were booked in. Some of us put up a fuss.

Shearer: What do you mean?

Cox: We mainly muttered to ourselves. As a delegate, I protested to the hotel management but was told that it was simply hotel policy. I don't remember carrying it any further than that. However, when the convention was then in San Francisco and I was housing chairman; we had reserved a bloc of rooms at one of the nicer hotels in San Francisco. Then the hotel reneged, and I had to meet the buses at Third and Townsend and say that they [the black delegates] were reassigned to another hotel. Well, we reassigned our total convention delegate group to another hotel. This was the 1950s.

Also in the fifties, because of my PTA activities, I was asked to participate in several Governor's Conferences in Sacramento. These were conferences on children and youth, the family, and so forth. Anyway, I was serving as section recorder, and the chairman of the section was black. He had been very active in the YMCA. Up to that time, I had only seen blacks in menial positions--expressmen or porters. We worked very well together and he was very appreciative of my work. He gave me a hug. That was the first time a black person ever put his arms around me. He was far more used to dealing with white people than I was in dealing with black people. I was certainly surprised, but I'm sure I didn't flinch or anything.  
[end of addition]

## VII MILESTONES AND MEMORIALS

### Recollections of World War II##

Shearer: One thing I wanted to ask you a little bit more about is your recollections of wartime.

Cox: I well remember where we were the day of Pearl Harbor. I have not mentioned that Will was one of the founders of an organization then known as the Public Schools Business Officials Association. The board of directors of this group met twice a year, in March and December. My mother used to stay with the boys to allow me to accompany Will to these meetings, in March as a birthday treat and in December to celebrate our wedding anniversary.

On December 7, 1941, we were returning with another couple from such a meeting in southern California. At one stop for gasoline, we were asked if there were any servicemen with us; we thought that someone must be AWOL. In San Jose, we did not pay any attention to the newsboys with their "xtras." At the restaurant where we stopped for dinner, we discounted the rumors mentioned by the waitresses. We did not think to turn on the car radio. [That year] Mrs. Perata had stayed with the boys on account of my father's illness, and we were greeted with great relief by the boys when we reached home. We had had a lovely day.

Shearer: You told me before that you didn't have the sort of emotional, personal family involvement because your husband was already in the federal government and your sons were not involved.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: But [it] apparently did touch your life in an official way, when you served as air raid warden. In what other--?

Cox: Well, then there was the PTA. I have made a note of that. The PTA sponsored a system of block mothers. Have you heard about that?

Shearer: No.

Cox: The idea was that in case of an emergency there would be a sign in the window, and a child going to and from school would know that he could go there if an emergency arose while he was en route between home and school.

Shearer: Emergency meant air raid to you? Is that the kind of--?

Cox: Yes, yes, because in the beginning, and particularly as time went on there was always the thought that with Oakland Airport so near and the Alameda Naval Air Station here there might be trouble.\* There was supposed to have been a raid at Santa Barbara somewhere, a Japanese air raid--and it was in the event of an air raid or a warning that a block mother might be needed. Well, the sirens still go every so often. They give you advance warning when they're going to test the sirens.

A woman who agreed to be a block mother took a certain amount of training for feeding and for first aid. Then she put a sign in the window, so the children going back and forth would know that was a safe place to stay.

Shearer: Did you have that responsibility at the same time that you were an air raid warden?

Cox: Well, I suppose so, because it would all have been in the '40s.

Shearer: Yes, 1943.

Cox: I don't remember whether I was a block mother or whether I was only involved in organizing the program, but I know that we had lots of literature on feeding programs, for instance. There would be a possibility the children would be there for some period of time, you see, if it was a real emergency. [tape off briefly]

Shearer: I was going to ask you about food stockpiling and rationing. Did you have to do that?

Cox: Well, yes. There were a lot of instructions and some material that was put out by civil defense people, and by organizations to which you belonged. As I recall it, we didn't--personally, I mean, in this household--do a great deal of stockpiling. There was a neighborhood grocery right around the corner. From time to time I thought the owner favored his old customers by bringing out cans of tuna from under the counter and that sort of thing. [removes ration books from files] Here are the ration books. I'm a pack rat.

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\*The City of Alameda lies between the two airfields.

Shearer: It's wonderful to see these, yes. Well, The Bancroft [Library] will love this. And, of course, what was it that was rationed-- meat and sugar and lard; lard was saved, I know.

Cox: Oh, yes. Of course, there was a big recycling [of] tin cans, aluminum foil, and all. Where did we get the stamps? I see on the ration books that they were issued by a local board, with offices in the City Hall. I suppose the instructions are on there. Apparently each individual was issued a book.

Shearer: Well, gasoline was rationed, too.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Did that affect you particularly?

Cox: Well, I'd have to figure the dates again, but the boys were in college. We had gasoline ration books for transportation to school, and then there was car pooling, so we didn't do much driving.

Shearer: How did people feel about that? There was such an outcry when gas rationing was proposed recently.

Cox: Well, there was a very different feeling in the First and the Second World Wars. There was a patriotic feeling. The nation was united. There were dissidents and there were draft dodgers and that sort of thing, but there was the draft, and people supported the war effort and went without because that was the thing to do. That was, of course, very different, we'll say, from the Vietnam War. What would happen in case of another war, I'm sure I don't know. But in those earlier days there was a patriotic feeling.

People were cheating on it [laughter], and you didn't report on your best friends if you knew they were doing things. I've said, this grocer up at the corner, I knew that--you not only had to have the stamp, the store had to have the goods, and sometimes, we'll say, cans of tuna and that sort of thing were scarce, so that there was an advantage to having a long-established relationship with a grocer who would take care of his best customers. There were not supermarkets in those days, and you had a loyalty toward your shopping area. For years I was embarrassed, when I went to Safeway and Lucky's, to be going into a chain store when I had this grocery around the corner to which I was loyal, where I'd traded for so many years. That feeling, I guess, is gone.

Then there would be people who would just make the rounds with their books trying to get stuff. A man like at the store up here where I had traded for a good many years protected [his] customers by not having those things available for strangers, even though they might have the books.

Shearer: Did they ever charge more for items that people particularly wanted?

Cox: I don't remember that. I would think not. Well, in fact--this made me think of it--there were price controls on things so the grocer could not overcharge. But I bought some soup the other day. I bought several cans of Campbell's soup and it reminded me, for some reason, that, for instance, Campbell's was not supposed to raise the price on cans of soup, by whatever authority there was.

Shearer: The Wage and Price Stabilization Board.

Cox: The Wage and Price Stabilization Board. And then they got around it by changing the recipe. If you could only charge ten cents for a can of vegetable, then they changed the recipe and it was a new product to make, and they could charge more.

Shearer: To put out less vegetable soup at the same price? [laughter]

Cox: Yes. Less meat and more potatoes. [laughter] So there were ways they got around it.

Shearer: Very interesting. Was there a sense of apprehension and uneasiness that an air raid was imminent?

Cox: Well, depending on how easily you were frightened. [chuckles] As far as the European war, of course, was concerned, the only anxiety was that people had relatives or friends or neighbors in the war. But as far as the war in the Pacific was concerned, there were all these rumors around that the Japanese had sent balloons across to the northwest of the U.S. that were supposed to carry explosives and fire bombs. And there were some rumors that they had shelled Santa Barbara.

But people didn't get so--I don't remember much about radio in those days, but certainly there wasn't any television, so that you didn't get all this excited news or rumors every hour on the hour. People really weren't, I think, as keyed up as they are now with all of this constant bombardment [of news], you know, like for the hostages in Iran. Television is good [laughter] in some ways--everybody knows everything at the same time--but also you hear the same thing over and over again if you are listening more or less all day, as some people do, like my mother did when she was elderly. She heard the same bad news all day long.

But I don't recall that we were--unless you were pretty excitable, we really [didn't think] there was much danger here. We were willing to take precautions and be on the alert, but I don't recall any panic.

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Cox: Of course, we were aware of the Japanese being taken away. There was a rather large colony of Japanese here in Alameda. Many local people had Japanese maids and gardeners. There was also a restriction on other nationals because Alameda was considered a strategic area. Our good Italian friend, Mrs. Perata, was required to move to east Oakland although she had lived here [in Alameda] for a long time and owned property here. This was before she was a citizen.

It all seems a hideous blunder now. But probably few saw anything to protest. I did not have any personal experience with the Japanese. In fact, I can't remember whether Mrs. Perata was allowed to come back to Alameda [before the war ended] or whether we didn't see her until 1946 when she was allowed to return.

### Memories of the Depression

Shearer: We're moving back a little bit, back before the war, back to the Depression. I'm going back now to pick up where we left off on our outline. How did the Depression affect you? You said that the women's clubs suffered in their membership because money was short.

Cox: Well, we personally were very fortunate financially. There were firms whose employees were taking cuts in salary. Those who were working in the city, instead of taking a cut in salary, which is always hard to get back, contributed to a fund (I don't remember now how the size of contribution was calculated--on a percentage of a salary, something like that) and then we could draw from that fund to have work done. Unemployed people were paid then from that fund.

Shearer: This was sort of a voluntary salary diversion?

Cox: It may not have been truly voluntary--I don't remember who made the initial decision. Rather than taking a salary cut, we put--we, all public employees; I don't remember now the mechanics of it--we put a percentage of our salary aside every month into an unemployment fund, and from that fund we could draw on whatever talent or skills were available. We had a plumber who put in the lawn sprinkling system, and a cabinetmaker who made a great big cabinet for toys and games and painters who did painting for us. I don't remember, aside from those details. Then, when the emergency was over, and we no longer had to make the contributions to that fund, our salary remained as it had been.

Shearer: How was this handled?

Cox: I don't remember now. It must have been handled on a citywide basis in some way. My husband was in the business office of the school department at that point. I wouldn't remember. Well, there must have been some kind of a city organization, obviously, that administered it.

I do remember that perhaps there had been too much emphasis here at home on expenses or being thrifty, because I remember one Christmas we gave a sweater set to our oldest boy and he was very, very pleased with it although he hadn't asked for it. It occurred to me afterwards that maybe there had been too much talk around here about the expense of raising three boys, and that we had overdone the--had made them self-conscious, that they were a burden to us. I don't know. You're really never sure of these intangible things, but I just wondered if he'd gotten that im[pression], if there had been too much talk about how much it cost, you know, to do things.

Shearer: So you didn't experience or your husband didn't experience unemployment?

Cox: Not in the thirties. It was in the twenties that we had a rougher time.

Shearer: Why was that?

Cox: Well, there was a depression then, back in 1920, 1921. He had at that point left the Quartermaster Corps. After we came back from Manila and began to establish our family, and our oldest boy was born in 1921, Will decided that the Quartermaster Corps and the federal government wouldn't put him where he wanted to be, and he left and went into private employment. He went to work for Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation which had a big plant here in Alameda at that time. They then began to have difficulties and to retrench, and week after week--whatever color the layoff notice was--the pink slip wasn't in our envelope, and we thought we were in pretty good shape. Then eventually it came, and he lost his job. He worked at one thing or another for, oh, a couple of years or more, I guess, and things were rather difficult.

However, we were young and we just had the one baby, so that we didn't have expenses as if they were of school age or beyond. Then eventually he went to work for the school department.

Shearer: But you were not working at this time?

Cox: No.

Shearer: How did you make ends meet?

Cox: Well, we scrimped.

Shearer: Did you have to borrow from your family?

Cox: No, no.

Shearer: Just managed it with odd jobs here and there?

Cox: Not really odd jobs. We had savings because we'd been married by then for several years, and Will had had savings when we were married.

One of the firms that Will worked for during this time was a local mill which made sashes and doors. One day the manager told my husband that he would have little chance of advancement with the firm, because there were a number of young men in the family of the owner who could expect to be employed in the executive positions. We always thought this was very considerate of the manager.

That was one point so far as my husband was concerned that I sometimes used to resent, but in the long run I suppose it didn't matter. I handled the money, and therefore I didn't make demands. [laughter] I knew whether the money was there or not. I think in some ways that relieved my husband of responsibility. I feel very guilty, really, to quote him, but he told me once that I was the one that was always complaining, but that he had always brought in enough. I thought, well, the only reason he brought in enough was that [chuckles] I was good at parceling it out. I didn't feel that he assumed his share of the money management. If he had been paying the bills and buying the food and all, he would have been more appreciative of our financial situation. I thought he put a burden on me.

### Confronting the Limits in Life

Cox: It was at that time--do you want to talk about travel? It was at that time that I gave up all idea of ever seeing the world. When I was younger and in college and so on I had looked forward to--well, I didn't ever expect to be affluent, but I didn't, I guess, know what was coming. It was about this time that I realized what my husband's earning capacity was going to be, and that there was very little chance of my ever getting very far from home.

I've often felt a little guilty about that since. [chuckles] I didn't anticipate air flights or tour packages. In those days, you had to have a long vacation; you had to get by train to New York; you had to get by ship to Europe; you had to really have a big chunk of time as well as money. It was at about this point in my life

Cox: where I gave up all thought of getting places, and now when I've been to some places I realize that I didn't anticipate--couldn't, perhaps, anticipate--how society was going to change to the point where even a person of the middle class could get around to see the world.

Shearer: Do you sort of regret or resent now having spent time sorrowing over that fact, or maybe communicating disappointment of your husband?

Cox: No, I don't imagine that I ever talked about it, but I just in my own mind began to be realistic and get over the glow, you know, of the future and realize what was attainable. Well, I suppose I was a little unhappy about it, but it was just coming to grips with reality, I guess is what you'd say, which I guess happens to everybody when they come to some station in their life.

Then I didn't guess that I would be going to Europe in 1963 and 1964. This was the beginning of the charter tours. In 1963 we flew to London and then on to Edinburgh, Newcastle, Bergen, Oslo, Copenhagen, and home from Paris. In 1964, we took the so-called grand tour from Cologne, then a few hours on the Rhine, Austria, Lucerne, Italy, and again home from Paris.

Of course, eventually--we're jumping now to the time I'm a widow. I know women who didn't know which end was up when they became widows. Well, I knew all of it because I'd been handling most of it. I knew what our bank balances were; I knew where things were; I knew what was in the safe deposit box. I didn't have any real difficulty in organizing my life financially because I knew what insurance policies we had, and I didn't have any awakening, or [I was] not left in an ignorant state when he died. I cannot understand how some widows just know absolutely nothing about their financial affairs when their husbands die. That was not my experience.

I was interested in figures. Will was an accountant, you see, and I was also interested in figures. In those earlier days, we kept our accounts every month to the penny. He took an allowance, a spending allowance, and I had a food allowance and paid all the bills, and then at the end of the month we would actually sit down and keep books and try to come out to five cents. Later on, we quit being that particular, but I still to this day keep a monthly bookkeeping record. By then we were using it more as a budget worksheet than we were to keep track of the money down to the last penny. So when I get ready, which I'm going to have to do pretty soon, to get at my income tax again, it's not going to be any very great problem.

Shearer: Yes, the regular records.

Cox: Yes, I have the records and I'm interested in figures.

Death of Father and Mother

Shearer: Maybe we should go back to the death of your parents, first your father and then your mother. Your father died in 1941?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: In December? Just a few days after--

Cox: He really didn't know about Pearl Harbor. He had had a stroke and he'd been bedridden for some time. I suppose he listened to the radio and, of course, people came to call on him and there were newspapers; he knew about the war and he was really concerned about the war, but he was too ill to know about Pearl Harbor. He died on the fourteenth of December.

Shearer: Had he been in fairly good health up to that time?

Cox: Well, up until a year and a half or two years before that. He had a stroke. He was at home until the last week or so. My mother took care of him and also from time to time we had people come in. My brother knew a registered nurse who was not working, and she used to come over however often and help. But his chief care was from my mother.

During the week, about the twelfth of December, he was taken to the hospital. He was very impatient with all the tubes and so forth. On Sunday morning, the fourteenth, I had an appointment at Sunday school, and Will went to the hospital. I was to go to the hospital later, but my father died before I got there. His last words were, "Will, the Devil has me by the coattails."

Shearer: What sort of effect did his death have on your mother. Was she devastated?

Cox: Well, to a degree I suppose she was and she was very tired, but on the other hand we must all have seen it coming. She didn't witness the actual death. He was in the hospital several days before he died. However, she didn't want to have anything to do with the funeral arrangements; we made all of those arrangements. She decided she'd better go down to the undertaking parlor and see him before the day of the funeral, but she wiped all [preliminaries] out of her mind, and we took care of all of that.

Shearer: Did she attend the funeral?

Cox: Oh, yes, she attended the funeral and she went to the mortuary parlor and saw him before the funeral. Following my father's death and until after the funeral, my mother was really like an automaton, going

Cox: through the motions. After the funeral, some relatives and friends returned home with us, and I observed her begin to unfreeze. After about an hour, she seemed to be in command of herself again.

Shearer: It's hard. Did your father ever talk to you about what he wanted to happen after his death?

Cox: Well, I don't exactly remember, except that--whether he actually said this or whether we just inferred it--his favorite poem was "Crossing the Bar." I don't remember now whether he actually requested that. There was not the same frankness about death. Nobody ever dreamed of not having a funeral service, of course. [laughter] My family all believed in cremation. There was that much; there was no burial in the ground as far as we were concerned. But I don't recall that people (at least, my family) made arrangements about their own funerals ahead of time, which I've more or less done now. [chuckles]

Shearer: And your mother had done that too, or did she take that responsibility for herself?

Cox: No. They did, however, have a niche at the Chapel of the Chimes. They had purchased it earlier from friends who wished to sell one because they were moving to southern California.

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Cox: Then my mother lived alone, and then my brother lived with her. My mother had cataract surgery when she was eighty-nine years old. We didn't know as much about cataract surgery in those days as we know now, and she was horrified when she found that this problem was [hers]. She kept going, wanting them to adjust the glasses, and when she finally heard she had cataracts, that was like a death blow. I didn't know enough about it really to advise her. So finally she decided she'd have to have the surgery, and she did when she was eighty-nine years old, and it was a success. She was able again to read and to write letters, which was her favorite occupation.

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Cox: Did I tell you about her last days? She was on toward ninety and was beginning to be in failing health. In fact, her doctor said to me once that I'd better do something about it or I'd get there someday and find her on the floor. It was at that point that we decided that she must come here. We had the room here now; the children were all gone and we had this house. It took quite a little bit of thinking because my husband by now was retired and we had begun to think of ourselves as being footloose. However, there was no thought but, if coming here was the thing that needed to be done, it would be done. This was a difficult thing because I--

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Shearer: You were just saying that you discovered you had to change roles.

Cox: Yes, I had to be in a position of telling her what to do rather than her telling me, as it had been in childhood. So we told her that she would have to come here to live, and she wasn't particularly happy about it.

Will went up one morning. He was going to go in the afternoon to actually move her, but he went up in the morning to help her pack her bag or whatever. He came home and he said to me, "Poor little bugger, she doesn't want to leave." She had taken him by the arm and gone all through the house. (I get all choked up when I remember this.) She had gone all through the house, saying good-bye. He was a little shook when he came back.

But anyway, he went back in the afternoon and brought her down. She wanted to bring with her a certain rocking chair and a certain picture that she was very, very fond of. Then she went to bed when she got here, and I thought, well, that was not surprising, that she had been through quite a bit of an emotional shock. But she really didn't ever get dressed again after that. If she got up, it was mostly in her robe. I really think she gave up.

She had always said she wanted to live to be ninety. She had a grandmother who lived to be ninety. And if you can will yourself [laughter] to stay alive till ninety, she did it, because she was just a little past ninety when she died.

Shearer: And she lived with you how long? Just a little while?

Cox: Well, it was only a matter of ten days or so.

Shearer: Really? And she'd been ailing?

Cox: For some time, yes, in a general decline. In fact, one of the reasons that we realized that she was failing--she, for instance, had had a cleaning woman come in, but it had become quite a burden to her to do her own cooking, and, of course, she hadn't been able to do her shopping for some time. There was a corner grocery that was good to deliver to her. It got to the point where I was taking food up, either her dinner or taking food up for her to warm up. I realized that in a way it would be just as easy for me to have her here as to be running back and forth all the time.

But then she was here only a short period of time. At the last, her death was unexpected. I was preparing dinner this particular Sunday. All of a sudden it occurred to me that maybe she'd find baby foods--you know. What do you call that?

Shearer: Gerber's?

Cox: Gerber's, yes, the stuff put through sieves, you know.

Shearer: Yes, strained.

Cox: Strained foods. I thought maybe she'd find those easy to eat and attractive. I had gone to the store just a little while before to load up on some of that, and I had dinner ready for my husband and myself. Dinner was on the table.

Shearer: And there had been no hint of that that day?

Cox: Well, yes, she had had a heart attack within the days just previous to that, and the doctor had given her a sedative of some kind, so we knew, but even then we didn't know that death was imminent. One of the things that was interesting, I thought, was that when she had the heart pain, before the doctor got here (this was not the day she died; this was a few days before), she was wishing for my father. The fact that I was there and being solicitous and all--she said, "If only your father were here." [chuckles] What he could have done, I don't know, but anyway, I thought that was an interesting moment because he had been dead for a long time at this point. So, at any rate, she died right in--

Shearer: With you?

Cox: We were both here. My husband and I were with her when she died. We had fixed up a commode, and she needed to use it. We got her onto the commode, and she died. So we got her back onto the bed again and called my brother and his wife, who lived over there in east Oakland. They came very quickly and, of course, we got the doctor. The doctor then stayed with us until the undertaker came.

So after our being noble about having her come when it was not going to be too convenient for us, we were not martyrs very long; she died so soon. While she suffered some the last few days, still the doctor was able to give her medicine, and then at the last it was only a matter of a few minutes.

She had had cataract surgery when she was eighty-nine or so.

Shearer: I remember your telling me that, yes.

Did her death frighten you in a way?

Cox: Well, it was the only time I had even seen anyone die, and yet there was no struggle, and I'm not even sure that--well, I don't know that I'd ever seen a dead person except laid out for a funeral. But, no, it didn't particularly bother me. Since we

Cox: knew she was not well, and perhaps selfishly, too, it was a relief that the whole thing was settled. I think we had been more anxious the few days previously when we didn't know what to expect from minute to minute and how to handle things and what to feed her.

Shearer: And when she was in pain too.

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: That makes you feel helpless.

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Afterwards, though, when--[pause] I'm trying to think back to my own experience. I guess maybe in the few months passing, did you feel that a piece of your past had gone with her?

Cox: Well, I had a feeling then the same as I did later when my husband died. It took me weeks or almost months to get over thinking to myself. "I must remember to tell her that." It was the same with my husband when he was in the convalescent hospital. I'd be going around town; I'd see somebody; there would be something in the paper-- "I must be sure to tell him." It took me weeks in both those occasions to get over that. Now, of course, I realize I should have asked her more family questions when I could have.

Also, it seems appropriate to give an account of the last days of my grandmother. In her later years, my grandmother lived around with her children. She had sold her house in Berkeley after the death of her husband and mother-in-law and had gone to keep house for her youngest (and then unmarried) son. She preferred our home, where the children, by then, were older and my mother was very attentive.

She was living with my parents when she died in 1932. She became critically ill in January, and we hesitated to make social engagements for some time. But when she died early in the morning on March 14, we proceeded with Paul's sixth birthday party, as planned.

I don't remember who suggested this, but as a gift for her eightieth birthday, in 1925, we arranged for her to have a sightseeing airplane ride over the San Francisco Bay area. This seemed appropriate, or even symbolic, for a woman who had come to California in a covered wagon in 1852.

William Cox, Senior, the boys' great grandfather, died in the thirties. In the later years of his life, he was living in a single apartment, "baching" it. He was not very well, not eating

Cox: properly. He and I were never very congenial. (My father-in-law had warned my husband that he was making a big mistake to marry a girl with an education.) We also had three young children, so I was not keen on having him move in with us. We paid for three months at the Beulah Home, thinking that he was so thrifty, he would stay the three months and maybe by then he would like it. He did like it and lived there about a year. The doctor whom we engaged to call on him eventually reported that he was failing, and we ought to take care of any legal matters soon. Within a very few days after that, he died. I don't remember anything about the funeral. He had few friends and no relatives, so it must have been a small service.

### Will's Death

Shearer: When did your husband die?

Cox: Nineteen sixty-nine. The doctor wasn't sure at the time what it was, colitis perhaps. He was taken ill at just about Christmastime here at home. The doctor came here to the house, and whatever he gave him seemed to work out temporarily. But he was by this point very weak, and it was too much for me to lift him or try to get him on the commode, and within a day or so the doctor put him in the hospital. At that point I don't think the doctor was sure exactly what the problem was, but whatever, a blockage of some kind, an intestinal problem, they were able to clear up. But then he just began to sink. This was about Christmastime.

By February or so the doctor--Dr. Lester Johnson had known my husband in the Kiwanis Club. It was not a personal relationship. We weren't socially acquainted, but we were friends, and I had known him in the Red Cross, where had been active; the doctor, I mean. He said that as far as Medicare was concerned, Will couldn't stay in the hospital any longer because he wasn't showing any improvement (Medicare was a great help with the hospital bill of several thousand dollars).

Paul came down one day and spent the day with me, and we had a long talk with the doctor at his office. Then we went around looking at various convalescent places. Will was incontinent, and to have had him here at home would have meant a hospital bed, and all the laundry. Also, it was practically impossible then to get night nurses, for instance, or even day nurses, or other help. The doctor advised us to have him go somewhere other than here at home. At that time one of the places in town was new, and the doctor thought that would be a suitable place, and of course it would be convenient for me.

Cox: Here again, Will didn't have any particular judgment in the matter. We asked the doctor to tell him, so Dr. Johnson told him he was going to be moved. I never knew to what extent this stroke, or whatever it was he had, had affected his--whether he had been affected mentally or whether he was just very compliant. He never asked to come home in those several months, and I'd have dreaded it if he had. I never let us get onto the subject. But he never asked to come home; he seemed to be placid and accepting. Apparently the nurses were all fond of him. He didn't make demands and perhaps he was kind of pleasant or wisecracked. He wasn't interested in watching television; there was a television up on the wall. He didn't seem to fight being there. Now, whether he had been affected mentally or whether it was just his temperament to take what comes, of course, I don't know.

Shearer: When did the stroke come? Later on in February?

Cox: Yes, the decline. I don't know that it was really a stroke, but it was deterioration of his condition. The final cause of death was a silent heart attack.

I went every day to see him. This particular day in July, I was a little later than usual, and when I got there I realized that there was something the matter, so I called immediately to the nurse on duty. They had nurse's aides, you know, as well as a registered nurse on duty. It turned out later that they had a new person working in the wards that day. In other words, he'd been in that condition a good part of the day, and no one had realized it because this new aide hadn't known him before and didn't realize he was different now.

So when I got there and saw him, then I got after them. They couldn't find his pulse, and by now the RNs were in on it, and they were giving him oxygen and what all. It was Wednesday, the doctor's day off, and we had a terrible time. But finally, by late afternoon or early evening, at five or six o'clock, we got hold of the doctor and he told me that Will wouldn't live if he was left there, and he wasn't sure he would live if he got to the hospital, but he wanted to move him. And I didn't have the nerve to say, "Let him stay here and die."

So the ambulance came and, within two or three hours of dying, with the oxygen bottle and all the rest, they got him over to the hospital, and I said I would follow in my own car. When I got over there I found that, critically ill as he was and knowing I was on my way, they had had him sign himself in. I really thought that was cruel. There was his very frail signature where he had signed himself into the hospital, when the ambulance people knew I was coming, and the doctor was following over, too.

Cox: Well, anyway, by then they wanted to take all these tests and things; by then I suppose it was seven o'clock or so. I said that I'd come home for dinner and then I would come back as soon as I could. While home, I telephoned the boys to alert them. When I went back, within an hour or so, Dr. Johnson was waiting for me and took me by the hand and took me into the room, and Will was dead. I said to him, "I'm glad that you were with him when he died." Dr. Johnson said, "Well, I'm sorry, I wasn't. I was down looking at his X rays." So he was alone when he died.

Then Dr. Johnson said, "What are you going to do?" "Well," I said, "I'm going to go home." He said, "Is anybody going to be with you?" and I said, "No." "Well," he said, "I don't want you to be alone tonight." So he phoned one of my sons and said he thought I ought not to be alone. Then he said, "How are you going to get home?" "Well," I said, "my car's out here in the [parking] lot; I'm going to drive home." He had one of the stewards go down to the parking lot with me and see that I got into my car, but I didn't particularly see at that point why I couldn't manage. After all, you have to handle that yourself, you know.

But anyway, my youngest son, who lives the nearest--and it was not convenient for him at the moment; he was at school or somewhere--came over shortly. Then we got word to the other boys, and Paul came down from Carmichael and they all came for the funeral.

Shearer: Was that hard on you, too, the funeral?

Cox: Well, not particularly. We had asked not to have the casket open. The mortuary where we went has a private room for the families.

We didn't have any particular religious faith, but I had come to admire one of the ministers in town through working with him in the Red Cross. So we asked him to be the officiating minister. I was not going to go through all the ritual of a big Masonic funeral.

Shearer: Oh, your husband was a Mason, that's right!

Cox: Oh, he was the past master of his lodge, and I just was not going to go through with all of that. So we asked the minister to come. My oldest son made a few remarks, and it was David's idea that we take a sprig of the redwood tree in our yard that had always been a symbol to us, and put it on the casket, I suppose under--I don't remember now what kind of a floral blanket we had. Anyway, the boys kept thinking of those things, you know. Bill said he would like to speak, and he did. Then all the family stayed with me a while. So it was as easy as any of those things ever is.

Cox: Anytime like that, I've always felt the boys rally, you see. We may not pay much attention to each other day by day but the minute there's any sign of a need for help, they rally. (They rely on my next door neighbors to watch my daily comings and goings.)

The Family Memorial for Boy Scout Camperships

Shearer: What sort of a feeling did you have about the tree?

Cox: Well, that redwood tree has been here since it was this big. [gestures] A Berkeley group of Boy Scouts was selling small redwood trees--as a money-raising affair one time, however many years ago, and so that tree's been back there forever, ever since the boys were little. It's just been sort of a symbol. It was a sort of symbol of all the camping. We were an outdoor family, and we've done a great deal of camping, and my husband had been active in the Boy Scouts, and they'd all gone to Boy Scout camp.

I thought it was interesting and perhaps went back to their scout experiences that all the boys started out in the natural sciences. Bill was a mining engineer, though he's deviated from that; Paul became a forester; and David started out as an entomologist and now he's a horticulturalist. So there's been a great deal of interest in birds and outdoor life in all of our existence: camping trips, family camping trips, taking the boys on the Scout trips, going to Scout camp, and work parties at camp, and all that.

Did I ever tell you about the Cox Memorial Fund?

Shearer: I don't think so, no.

Cox: Since my husband was ill for quite a while before he died, we had time to think of a lot of things. For one thing, what made it easy for me--I figured that whether he ever came home again or not--anyway, I took care of his clothing. While he was there at the convalescent place, of course, all he needed was pajamas and a bathrobe. I went through all of his clothes and washed the shirts and all and put them in boxes. I figured, if ever he came home, okay; and if he didn't, at least there was none of this going through his closet and all that business after he died.

Shearer: Yes. That's just so sad too.

Cox: That had all been taken care of, and we only had to dispose of them, but at any rate they were--. How did I get onto that?

Shearer: The Cox Memorial Fund.

Cox: Oh, yes. So there had been time to think of things. Bill had suggested that we develop some kind of a memorial fund in lieu of flowers. We approached one of the attorneys in town who had been a Scout contemporary of Bill's, and he suggested this particular means of doing it. We tried to get the word out at the time of the funeral, and we succeeded partly. The Kiwanis Club has its own foundation which it supports, and other people had their favorite charities. But we did get word out as much as we could, suggesting people make a contribution in lieu of flowers.

Of course, Bill had been a little naive about this because, after all, you have to have an awful lot of flowers at five or ten dollars an arrangement to develop any kind of a memorial fund. I believe he put some money in himself, and there was other money contributed. Ever since then, when I have had occasion to contribute to a funeral, I have put money into the fund. I write a little note to the bereaved, saying what I have done.

The fund is administered by a local organization called the City of Alameda Foundation. They handle the fund without any charge, and the income from it goes every summer to Boy Scout camperships. Something like eighty dollars went this year to Boy Scout camperships. The idea is that the same thing will be done for me, you see, and with me they'll get the word out faster [laughter], since the fund is already in existence.

Many years ago, when each city had its own Community Chest--well, I've pushed lots of doorbells for all of those too! As I understand it, the City of Alameda Foundation was started with an initial sum derived from the original local Community Chest. The income from that is used to help organizations in town, not for administrative expenses but for capital expenditures. The foundation has a board of directors. Upon request from one of the nonprofit organizations in town, such items as an adding machine or copying machine may be purchased.

The foundation was willing--they had never done this for a private family before. Whether they now offer this service to other families, I don't know. But they had the proper cards printed to send to the family and so on, and they manage the fund without any charge.

Shearer: But the income from your portion of the fund then goes to the camperships?

Cox: Yes. They automatically send the money every year to the Boy Scouts for camperships.

Cox: For the most part, it's been the policy of the Scout executives not to give a full campership to a boy, but to offer campership assistance to boys either whose families don't have the money or who need help beyond what they can earn themselves. Eighty dollars or so a year wouldn't send very many the way prices have gone up now, but it would help. I don't remember. Five or six, I think, boys this year were helped.

So this project is really fine and we appreciate the work of the foundation. All of the boys were Eagle Scouts and they got a great deal of good--fun, advancement out of the Scout program. First they went to camp as scouts, and before it was over they were going as camp leaders. They eventually had leadership roles in the scouting organization. It was of very great interest and benefit to them.

Shearer: With all this organized preparation, I imagine you have made some plans for yourself.

Cox: I have. I've paid all the bills! [laughter] I've made--whatever. I forget what you call it. But anyway, the mortuary is just around the corner; I told them I'm going to walk over! [laughter]

I've paid all the bills. I have said the cremation has been customary for a long time in my family. The remains of my grandmother, my father, and my mother are over at the Chapel of the Chimes.

#### The Death of Roy Cox

Cox: I don't know whether I ever told you about Roy, that Paul and Gloria had a little boy who died.

Shearer: Oh!

Cox: They were of course dreadfully upset. We were out of town at the time. We were terribly upset too, of course, although we knew he wasn't well. He was a blue baby. But everybody had hoped he'd live long enough and they'd improve open-heart surgery enough to help him. When he died, we were away. We knew he was not well, but we didn't anticipate death, so naturally we were pretty crushed. We always, of course, told the family where we could be reached on a trip. When we got to Port Angeles, there was a word there to phone home, and the word was that Roy had died. So, of course, we felt a great shock, particularly my husband because he and the little boy were very, very close. There was really a rapport between those two.

Cox: We called back the next morning. By then, the funeral had been held, you see. We were a little more levelheaded about it, and they said, "There's no need for you to come home." So we finished our vacation and then went by that way on our way home. We really dreaded seeing them.

They had been unable to decide what to do with the remains. The child had been cremated. We said that we would take care of that, so that in the long run we felt that we had been of service to them. The other grandmother had come out from Philadelphia and had gone through the clothes and the toys and all that business. We arranged at the same columbarium for a niche for his ashes (well, they're not ashes; they're little chunks of bone) in the same vault with the niches reserved for my husband and me.

Shearer: Oh, that must have been such a comfort to them to think of his being close to his grandparents.

Cox: Well, I think it was, and we felt, too, that we had helped out. Also, when my husband died, this was a decision I did not have to make.

Shearer: Is this the columbarium in Oakland?

Cox: Yes, the Chapel of the Chimes.

Shearer: That's the one off Pleasant Valley Road?

Cox: Off Piedmont.

Shearer: Piedmont, yes, That's a lovely place.

Cox: After my husband's funeral, Bill stayed over with me for another day after the others had gone home. We went over to the Chapel of the Chimes. At the time of the death you're distraught, you know, and people are calling you up and are in and out, and you're kind of weepy and all of that. To have all those business arrangements all cleared up and taken care of is really a big help. So I've paid everything all up now and I'm going to make money on it. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] Because you're going to live to be 150!

Cox: [laughter] Prices have gone up since I signed up.

Shearer: That's right, that's right.

Cox: They honor the price at the time you make the decision, you see, and, of course, by now I'm sure it's gone up. I'm also not going to have any casket, and if they want to have a funeral service, I won't be there! [laughter]

###

Shearer: You were commenting that the purpose of a funeral--

Cox: As I see it, the funeral service is really only for the family. It makes a break and a farewell and is final. So I said, "Well, if they want to have a memorial service, okay, but I won't be there because I've arranged to have my body taken immediately without a casket to be cremated." I don't see the point in paying all that money to have a casket that gets burned up. They will forego the casket, you know if you request it; they'll put the body in a cardboard box or something. So that's the way I want it.

Shearer: It comforted my mother, I think, a lot to have made all her own arrangements herself and administered it and carried through and tied up all those loose ends.

Cox: Yes. Now, if I could just get them to come here and go through all my stuff! [laughter] You'll never believe what I found recently; when going through things I found vaccination records [laughter], way back when. After all, I have lived in this house for more than fifty years.

Shearer: Really? Well, you and I will have to do some sorting through too for the memoir.

Cox: Yes.

### Coping with Widowhood

Shearer: How did you cope with widowhood emotionally and socially?

Cox: Well, I was kind of eased into it by the fact that Will was in the hospital for that length of time (six months it was), so that I was used to at least living alone at home while he was still alive. And while there wasn't much chance of his ever coming home, still it wasn't final, you know; there was no finality. So to that degree his death didn't change my life pattern, except that it meant I didn't have to go to the hospital every day, which wasn't always the most convenient thing in the world, let's face it.

But as time has gone on--there are disadvantages. You don't have an escort. I was at Carmichael this last weekend, and they were talking about some other mother who is a widow, and someone asked me, had I ever considered remarrying? Well, I said, "First you have to be asked!" There aren't too many men floating around, and I'm not about to take on a man who's not in very good shape and nurse him, you know. A man has to have enough money to pay for all of his care.

Cox: So there are disadvantages in not having an escort. I probably would go to the theater more often, or go to the movies more often, having an escort at hand. But who's to say? Perhaps we wouldn't go, anyway.

Shearer: This is socially?

Cox: Socially. We didn't ever have much of a social life; that is to say, card parties and dancing and all that sort of thing. So there's been no difference there.

Shearer: You mean not as a couple?

Cox: As a couple, no. We hadn't had much of that kind of social life, or certainly not toward the last.

On the other hand, I go to, well, the historical society and evening meetings some. I either go by myself or I get a ride with some other widow in the neighborhood. Perhaps I would go more to cultural events if I had an escort.

As far as travel is concerned, now there's the Alameda Travelers Club.

##

Shearer: The Alameda Travelers?

Cox: I've been on a number of trips with the Alameda Travelers. It's a local organization. They're on their way to New Zealand right now. [tape off briefly] It started out as an informal thing but now I think it's more of a business arrangement with the leader. It's a type of group tour.

Shearer: Oh, I see. It's kind of a chartering organization in a way.

Cox: Yes. They go Greyhound, not to New Zealand, but--

Shearer: You went all the way to New Orleans on Greyhound?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Oh, my word!

Cox: I've done worse than that; I've gone all the way to the East Coast.

Shearer: When did you do this?

Cox: Oh, in the last few years. I gave up on this because--at least the long trips. I'm going down to see the Ramona Pageant in April.

Shearer: Is that in San Diego?

Cox: Yes, down in that area, Hemet-San Jacinto. I've never seen this pageant. I found that these three-week bus trips were getting a little too much for me, although they are planned very nicely. On the longer trips they stay two nights in one place every few days. That gives you a chance to wash your underwear, you know.

Shearer: Yes. [laughter]

##

Cox: Gladys McNutt and I went with the Alameda Travelers to Baja California together, for instance, last November. Then, of course, I've been overseas several times with Paul and Gloria.

Shearer: In traveling?

Cox: Yes. In 1971, we went with a group sponsored by San Francisco State College to Japan, Manila, Bangkok, Bali and back to Tokyo (also Taiwan). In 1973, we flew to Amsterdam, got to Stockholm, joined a tour at Helsinki, went on to Moscow and Leningrad, then flew back to Copenhagen, and drove back to Amsterdam. In 1979, we went to China, seeing Tiensen, Peking, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Tokyo.

In 1970, Gladys and I went on the Italia through the Panama Canal, and to Caracas one time and to Alaska in 1972. Then there's another group with which we have traveled, Great Western Tours.

Of course, with all of these, if you go as a singleton, you pay extra [laughter] and it isn't so much fun, either. But the Alameda Travelers, for instance--the several times when I would have been going alone, the manager of the group has found a roommate for me, another loner who was looking for a [roommate]. While those were strangers and we haven't kept up any communication since, it made it pleasant to have a traveling companion. You know, you can get along with most anybody for three weeks [laughter], and it's a little more pleasant traveling to go into the dining room with a seatmate, rather than say, "Could I sit with you?" and you find they're saving it for somebody else.

In 1977, I went on a train trip to Mexico this way once, from coast to coast.

Shearer: You were married more than fifty years. What about just having shared all of that history and then having your partner just drop out of your life?

Cox: Before I answer that, let me tell you how the family helped us celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary in a very beautiful way. I prepared the guest list, but they did everything else. We had a catered dinner here at the house for the family the night before and then had a lovely reception at the Adelphian Clubhouse the following day. Each family took responsibility for one part of the affair--invitations, food and decorating. Ruth had a big part in the planning, too; and all the grandchildren were present. I was glad that Will's health was still good enough for us to have this day.

But it is difficult [chuckles softly], and life is different. My children know I do not particularly enjoy cooking, and they thought that perhaps I would not eat properly. However, I discipline myself and by planning meals ahead and not relying on chance, I do very well. Eating alone sometimes gets boring, but I handle that problem by reading certain sections of the daily San Francisco Chronicle with each meal.

As far as family goes, I have the boys, you see, and their families. I hear young women now say they aren't going to have children and all, and I say, "Well, where would I wind up now if I didn't have a family?" because I said before today that we're all loyal to each other. Of course, I'm well situated here. Helen Clare has children in northern California, so when she comes up she is glad to come to see her children. Gloria's down from Sacramento quite often for one thing and another and stays here. She was here a couple of weeks ago. They're going to be here this weekend; they're going to a silver wedding anniversary Sunday.

Shearer: Oh, they're back from New Zealand?

Cox: Yes, they're back. They got back early in January.

Shearer: So the continuity isn't really broken as long as you have your children.

Cox: No, as far as that's concerned, and there's a lot of reminiscing and all going on, and they're interested in the things I'm doing now. I keep myself active or busy.

Shearer: Indeed, you do.

Cox: I don't find very many lonely hours. I turn on the television sometimes just to have a voice in the house. I've never gotten into the habit of listening to the radio and I don't just turn on the radio the minute I come in the house. In fact, I'll say I seldom turn on the radio, and I never (well, I'll say "never") listen to the television in the daytime, but I do rely on the television some at night.

Shearer: TV news?

Cox: I always watch the news and then whatever is on channel 9 that appeals to me. [chuckles] I'm not a slave to it; I'm quite selective. I do very little fiction reading. With all the organizations I belong to, I have trouble just keeping up with the journals that come from those groups, so that most of my reading is serious reading. Almost every evening I look to see what's on television and then plan my evening around that. Sometimes by nine or ten o'clock at night I'm tired of being serious, and then, of course, crossword puzzles take up a lot of time. [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] I don't see your big dictionary there. Don't you rely on--?

Cox: Well, I have a college dictionary there [gestures], and haven't you seen my great big dictionary on the stand in the den?

Shearer: Oh, I had forgotten that one. Okay. Well, that pegs you as a crossword puzzle addict! [laughter]

##

Cox: [comments supplied after the conclusion of taping] I still remember an incident that happened one day after I had become a widow. I had several engagements that day, and the first one did not take as long as I had thought. Thus I had some free time. It occurred to me then that this was perhaps the first time in my whole life that I did not have to check in with anyone. First it had been my parents, later the family, and still later my husband to be told of a change in plans. I was really on my own--at age 75.

Will once told me that he had debated marriage in his own mind for some time, as he feared that marriage would interfere with his freedom. This was a concept that had never occurred to me. This may have been a sex difference. Or perhaps it was due to a difference in our ages.

As time went on, I came to see us as individual parents sharing responsibilities. I never sensed a feeling of protectiveness on his part. Therefore I was surprised one time as Will was leaving for a few days to hear him tell Bill that he would "now be the man of the house."

As Bill grew to be fourteen or so, I began to talk with him about the inequalities between the sexes, hoping, of course, to enlist him in sympathy for women. What the result of this was I don't know. I suppose the boys may have sensed sometimes that there were tensions between their parents. I remember once when there had been a divorce among our circle of friends, Bill came to me,

Cox: quite disturbed, and asked if Will and I were contemplating a divorce. Of course, I assured him this was not the case. This is certainly an area where there has been a great change, in my family as well as others in this day and age. [end of additional written comments]

##

### The Berkeley Experience

Cox: By the way, I went to the Berkeley Experience a couple of years ago. Do you know that? Gladys and I attended the Berkeley Experience for two years.

Shearer: What is the Berkeley [Experience]?

Cox: It's this thing the [University of California] Alumni Association runs. I got a write-up in Newsweek.

Shearer: What did you think of it?

Cox: Oh, we had a wonderful time.

Gladys went to Normal school for two years. She's six months younger than I. Then she went back to Illinois with her family at one time to visit relatives who lived on a farm, and so she got a little farther behind in school. So, we were not classmates.

While we went to school together--I told her the other night that I was going to tell you this, and she didn't object--she was the one who believed that women's place was in the home. It was while we were in high school that California allowed women to vote. I went around wearing a "Votes for Women" button, and Gladys thought women's place was in the home.

Well, she got married. [laughter] She didn't ever have any children. She had the professional life, teaching all her life [laughter], and I was a homebody.

Her graduating ceremonies from Normal school were held in the Greek Theater. That was her only tie with the campus.

It was Paul who first saw about this program advertised in the California Monthly or somewhere, and so I asked Gladys if she'd like to go, and we went.

Shearer: This was an all-day [event]?

Cox: A week, at Stern Hall. We lived there, and they took us all around, you know, and showed us things.

We got there this Saturday, I guess, afternoon, and they began to hand out all of the material and the passenger list. [chuckles] Somebody said, "Gee, there's somebody here from the class of '17!" Well, it was I! [laughter] So, we were kind of belles of the ball before the thing had started. Then, as it turned out, we kept up as well as or better than some of the others.

Shearer: I can well imagine.

Cox: She's quick-witted and had lots to say.

The staff all had felt badges. So, before it was over, the last day--lunch, I think it was--they had a little ceremony and gave Gladys and me felt badges [laughter] because we were the old-timers. Somebody was always asking, you know, like my grandchildren, "Tell us what it was like in the olden days." [laughter]

Well, I keep up with things, and maybe that's having three sons. But when we went to the earthquake place on one of the tours, I asked them if they'd explain tectonic plates to me. I've kept up enough, either with my reading or the fact that I have children or grandchildren, whatever, that I am not as far behind as one might think. [laughter]

Shearer: Well, you're certainly no stranger to current events.

You say you went to the "earthquake place." You mean on this Berkeley--?

Cox: Yes. They planned something for us every day, and they took us on tours, and we went here, there, and the other place. One time we went to see the seismograph in whichever building that is. Another day we went to the art museum. Another day we went to the anthropology museum, and that was when I called somebody aside and asked if they would be interested in any of the Philippines stuff I had. We went not to Livermore, but to the Berkeley lab.

Shearer: Lawrence Berkeley Lab?

Cox: Yes, and the Lawrence Hall of Science. We went to the Botanical Gardens, and we had lunch in the little Eucalyptus area right near the Botanical Gardens. They planned something for us every day.

Then, later, somebody from Newsweek called me up, a bolt out of the blue. Apparently, they had contacted the Alumni Association and had gotten my name. Apparently, Newsweek had sent word to all

Cox: of their bureaus around the country, because this is now more or less a common thing. Within the last six or eight years, lots of alumni associations are doing it, and each may be doing it in a different manner, a different setup, but the same general thing.

So, this woman called me up and wanted to know something about it, and I said, "Well, where else could an old woman like me get a chance to live in a dorm for a week?" Of all the brilliant things I said [chuckles], that one was quoted in Newsweek! [laughter] So, I had fun with that too because I knew it was coming out; we didn't know which issue. So, Paul called me up and told me when the issue was out.

I belong to Delta Kappa Gamma. Now, you know what that is? One of my Delta Kappa Gamma sisters read it on her summer vacation [and said,] "Well, I know that gal!" [laughter]

Shearer: Isn't that something! That [Delta Kappa Gamma] is a professional--

Cox: It's a national honor society for women teachers. I'm an honorary member because, obviously, I'm not actively teaching. I figure the reason that they asked me is, for one thing, I knew some of the women in it, and also they thought they ought to broaden their scope. They didn't have anybody from adult education, and that's where all of my teaching experience has been. So, the combination of their seeking someone from the adult area and my knowing some of the other people in the group--I think that was why I was asked to become an honorary member of Delta Kappa Gamma.

I went to the Berkeley Experience this year, too (1981).

## IX LOOKING TO THE FUTURE##

Shearer: You said once when we were talking earlier that you think of immortality not so much in a religious sense as in [the sense of] the influence that lives after a person or in or through the children. How do you view the future?

Cox: I have no belief in a hereafter. I think when you're through, you're through. I don't have any belief in heaven or an afterlife.

Another thing that I don't allow myself to dwell on much [laughter] is what's going to happen to me in the next few years because, after all, next month I'll be eighty-six. While I'm in good shape now--in fact, I recently had an eye exam and a general physical, and I'm all right. I have some trouble with my hair thinning (maybe you remember); my hair was not as full as this when you first knew me.

Shearer: Oh, no, I don't--

Cox: It looks pretty good now.

Shearer: It looks wonderful.

Cox: So I have checked off all those things and I'm in good shape, but who knows what's going to happen in x number of years? I give a reasonable amount of thought to that. Financially I don't have to worry. I have a reasonable amount of cash in savings and I have the value of this house, so that I'm sure that I'll never be a financial burden to any of the children. But what will come of my life in the next five years, who knows?

Shearer: Yes. The prospect of being helpless is, I suppose, much worse.

Cox: Yes, of having to ask for help and all that, or some catastrophe of some kind, but there's no way you can foretell all of that, and I don't allow myself to think about it too much. One comforting thing

Cox: to remember when you hear about all these horror stories about convalescent homes and all, is that only about four or five percent of the population ever wind up in them. [laughter]

Shearer: Oh, really?

Cox: Yes, it's that low. Did you know about that?

Shearer: No, I didn't.

Cox: Well, I didn't either, until recently.

Shearer: I think of it as a major social trend. Well, I'm glad to hear you contradict that.

Cox: I've seen those figures several times. It's very low, four or five percent who will end up [in convalescent homes]. Some who do are very pitiful; they're in bad shape and nobody ever comes to see them.

Of course, I have my home. It's not easy, however, to find a live-in housekeeper. I know that.

Shearer: Well, I think it's not maybe so hard to find a housekeeper as it is to pay them what they're worth, or have Medicare or MediCal help you along with something like that.

Cox: Yes. Anyway, I won't need to make those decisions by myself because I know the boys will be very helpful in helping me make plans so long as I'm compes mentis. [laughter]

Shearer: I can't imagine you ever being non compes mentis. [laughter]

Cox: [laughter] I hope not! My mother was very sharp right to the last. She really was.

Shearer: Yes. And she was in pretty good health, really, right up to the end, wasn't she, that last year?

Cox: She showed me that you could live forever and have bad health. She had a nervous disorder of some kind and she was always complaining of stomach trouble and constipation. In the beginning I never knew about why you're supposed to have constipation. After I found out [laughter] all the psychological reasons, I didn't think she'd take it very kindly. I never told her. [laughter] She would not have thought of herself as a retentive kind of a person! As I said, she was very sharp right [to the last]. Oh, her health, yes. Well, she had never been in really, you might say, robust health. But I figured, well, if you could live to be ninety and have all the complaints she had, it couldn't be so bad after all.

A Vision of Progress in History

- Shearer: Looking back now to the sixties--well, actually, some of these decades that are given colorful names like the roaring twenties and the quiescent fifties and the restless sixties and so forth--do you see a pattern of advance at all, looking back, or do you see a kind of a cyclical movement?
- Cox: Well, I think it's hard to think, in a way, of a cyclical movement, with all the advances that are going on. There was not television; there were not computers; there were not Reagans.
- Shearer: Now, is Reagan an advance, do you think?
- Cox: No, he's not my favorite. He didn't get my vote and I'm very apprehensive about Reagan, very apprehensive. I don't so far think much of that [David] Stockman guy who's his director of the Office of Management [and Budget]. There was quite an exposé of him in the paper the other day, about how ambitious he is and how he will cut other people's throats [chuckles] in order to get ahead himself.

The "Get Mine" Generation

- Cox: It seems to me that it's hard to think of cycles with such revolutionary changes coming all the time. On the other hand, I saw the other day that all the freshmen now at Cal and Stanford are supposed to be conservative. The way I explain that to myself and the conservative sweep, if there was one this last November, is that the middle class or the blue-collar workers have finally climbed up into the middle class, and they're not going to let anybody take it away from them. They've turned conservative because now they've gotten farther than they ever dreamed of getting. That may not be the right [explanation]; that's my answer to the conservative [sweep]. And I am disturbed at the--I thought California, for instance, and other people were becoming more liberal and more progressive. I didn't necessarily see the government as being the answer to everything, but I am a little concerned about the [mentality of] "me get mine" and "the hell with everybody else." Now, whether that is a cycle or a pendulum swing, I don't know, but that sort of thing disturbs me.

I think I've said before that the reason I enjoy belonging to all these organizations is I don't feel so helpless if I belong to enough do-good organizations. [laughter] I'm "fifteen-dollar" myself to death.

Shearer: I notice that you belong to the Cousteau Society and Common Cause.

Cox: Yes, yes.

Shearer: And what are some of the others now? I think we talked off tape about some of the ones--the Sierra Club. What do I have? [consults notes]

Cox: Well, I will have a list of them when I do my income tax. [laughter]

Shearer: Yes. But I think I can understand why it would be comforting to remind yourself of the network of well-intentioned people working to solve problems.

#### Conservation Gains Slipping

Cox: Yes, yes. According to all the commentators, there does seem to be a cycle or whatever or a slip from the-- The conservationists for a while were on the way up and things were pretty well going their way, and there seems to be, with the new administration, a cutting back in regulations requiring smokestack scrubbing and that sort of thing. Whether that is temporary--I would hate to think that it was a loss of all the years of effort with conservationists coming to the front. Now in today's paper there's a consideration of changing the decision about oil drilling to allow drilling off the California coast. Did you see that?

Shearer: I didn't see that.

Cox: Just before the Carter administration went out, the secretary of interior, after a great deal of pressure, decided not to put up for bids certain oil-drilling areas here on the northern California coast.

Shearer: Oh, the offshore--

Cox: The offshore drilling. And the new man is changing that.

Shearer: Oh, Secretary of Interior James Watt is?

Cox: Yes.

Shearer: Including Santa Barbara?

Cox: Well, I don't know that it's down as far as Santa Barbara, but it's in today's paper. He's only just announcing his intention, or he's giving thought to it, but the commentator said that he wouldn't be saying that at all unless he was pretty well decided to do it. Well, everybody's jumped in, and there are sixty days to reply and all, and the governor shot off a telegram. It did seem for a while that the conservationists were going to be on top for a little while; now they seem to be on the down skid. But to that point I perhaps believe in cycles; I can't believe that they would be gone altogether, but they may lose influence. But what good they have done is not going to be completely ploughed under.

### A Changed Role for Women

Cox: One of the things that does seem, when you've lived as long as I have--a little slow, is in a way how little has changed in forty years as far as women are concerned. I don't know whether I have told you about my husband's friend the conservative sea captain. He met my husband on the street one day (this was, you know, in the early '40s) and he said, "I've heard this story about your wife! It isn't true, is it?" My husband said, "Well, what are you talking about?" He replied, "Well, I heard she'd gone to work!" and my husband had to admit that I was doing part-time teaching. [chuckles]

Shearer: Oh! [chuckles] And this was in 1940-something?

Cox: Or late 1930s. My young friends now who want things to change by tomorrow afternoon get a little annoyed with me I think when I point out how it's only taken forty years to get this far! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] And yet in the war years a very sizable proportion of the work force consisted of women who replaced the men who were going off to war.

Cox: That's right. And the child-care program here in Alameda in which I was involved was intended to allow women to work, but then when the war was over they were supposed to run back home again. But I would never have dreamed in my young married life that it would just be accepted that women would more or less have to go to work in order to maintain any kind of a standard of living, and that it would be accepted by not everybody but by a number of people in society that that's an appropriate thing to do and that children don't need to have their mothers at their beck and call every hour of the day in order to grow up to be flag-waving American citizens.

Shearer: Do you think there are advantages or disadvantages to having a working mother?

Cox: Well, in those days it was as much as your life was worth to convince people that there was any educational value to a children's center, for instance.

Shearer: This is in the '40s?

Cox: Yes. It was seen completely as a babysitting device for women who were too lazy to--or who preferred, you know, to go off and do other things and dump the children. And the fact that either a woman had some right to self-expression that need not be cut off by motherhood, or families needed the income, and that there were advantages to the children--I'm thinking of preschool children now, with the contact with their own ages, because a two-year-old in his own family doesn't have many two-year-olds to play with or even in his circle of friends--so I've seen that whole philosophy change. You don't have to defend children's centers anymore in the way that it had to be done before.

I do think that still there's a very heavy burden on the mother. Last night I went to a League of Women Voters meeting. One of the women who had intended to come couldn't come because at the last minute her husband had a business arrangement that he couldn't avoid, and that left a problem with the children: she had to stay home. She had to give up a nonessential meeting rather than the husband give up the business commitment.

Shearer: So her responsibility was still considered the primary one as far as the children were concerned?

Cox: Yes, yes. And she's a working mother too; she works away from home.

Also, while there are a good many men perhaps who are willing to help with the housework or carry out the garbage, I do feel that for the most part society still feels that it's the woman's major responsibility, and I think that puts a very heavy burden on her. She has to work eight hours a day and then still do all of the housework and spend her weekend catching up with the washing and other household chores. I don't know too many men who are more than just helping out, loading the dishwasher or carrying out the garbage or perhaps helping with the shopping.

Shearer: Yes. I suspect that [with] men and women probably ten years younger than I am that is changing, or at least the doctrine is changing. How much the theory has filtered down--

Cox: And the acceptance. But how much it's actually down to the nitty-gritty, I don't know.

Shearer: And practiced, yes.

What would you do differently if you had it to do all over again?

Cox: I think that's very difficult to say because you have to remember the atmosphere and the milieu in which I was living or brought up, and I've done pretty well to knock off the shackles! [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] I'll say!

Cox: So I don't know that I could have gone much farther. I never had very much money to play around with. Whether I would have been more assertive, I don't know. I really didn't need assertiveness training. [laughter] I find that a little hard to understand.

It's possible that all of the soul searching or whatever that I had to go through is not done by other women because they have come into the picture at a stage beyond where I entered it and when there is more acceptance. For instance, in my day a woman never planned to go out in the evening; I would say really never did. Her meetings or tea parties or bridge groups were supposed to take place in the daytime, and by evening she was to be available for the family. Now young women of my acquaintance go to evening meetings without even thinking of it, unless their husband has an important business engagement and they get stuck with the children. [laughter] So I suppose there has [been]--well, I won't say an improvement--a change, and we hope it's an improvement. [chuckles]

Women didn't demand so much in those days either, you know. We may not have enjoyed the restrictions, for instance, but we didn't see that as a sacrifice of our nobility. In fact, it was the other way around, you know: you were being noble to give up for your family. [chuckles]

Shearer: I imagine that that's a confusion or a conflict for many women.

Cox: I would almost say it's worse now where the women have so much more choice. It's the same with children; I think it's more difficult to bring up children where there are so many more distractions and so much more openness and so much more freedom. Gloria and I got onto this subject last weekend. I was married before I really knew what a prostitute was; now, that's true. I'd, you know, heard about what went on in San Francisco. [chuckles] A high school boy once got in serious trouble somewhere over in San Francisco, but that was all pretty on the hush-hush.

Shearer: Because of some connection--

Cox: The red-light district or somewhere. But I really didn't know what a hooker was or that women stood out on the corner, you know. If they were doing it, that was beyond me. A nice girl just didn't know about that, and a boy who respected you would never dream of offering you sexual favors or asking for them. If a boy did that, why, that was the last you ever saw of him because nice boys just didn't do that.

So there is more openness and temptations, if you will, and knowledge. And the pill [laughter], abortions--those were words that weren't in my vocabulary.

Shearer: Did you ever know or hear of anyone who had had an abortion when you were young?

Cox: I think it would be much, much later that my mother told me that one of her friends had aborted herself with a coat hanger, or tried to. I don't know whether it worked. I don't think I ever knew there was such a word as "abortion" in those days.

#### Advice for Young Women

Shearer: If you had to give a piece of advice, what would you give a young woman starting out today, or a young man?

Cox: You mean if she wanted it? [laughter] If she asked for it?

Shearer: [chuckles] Well, what would you like to say, whether or not they'd like to hear it? What do you think is sort of an important polestar to [guide a young person]?

Cox: Well, I think that I would be frank in saying that life is more difficult now; there are more choices available; you have to think through more clearly. (I still don't know that I am sympathetic to living with a man without being married. I think there are almost as many difficulties in breaking up that kind of a relationship as there are in a true divorce relationship.) But the fact that she has many more opportunities may, on the other hand, mean more responsibility for her own life or for her conduct in society.

On the other hand, I would hate to discourage a person by saying there's no hope or that everybody's going to the dogs or going to--where is it you go in a hand basket? [laughter]

Shearer: [laughter] To hell in a hand basket.

##

Shearer: You were saying that it takes more consciousness.

Cox: Well, conscious awareness or conscious thinking. You don't just drift along with what's expected of you anymore. In my day, you were more or less expected to get married and have a family and [have] your husband support you, and you worked in the ladies' aid or some other respectable places. Many more occupations are listed now in all of these career magazines.

Shearer: That's right.

Cox: On the other hand, there are supportive organizations which were not around. I got terribly bored living alone with children; maybe I told you, I used to bundle them all up and go to the corner grocery so I'd have a grown-up to talk to. I used to think they ought to have a padded room somewhere where a woman could just go and scream her heart out, you know. [chuckles] So maybe it's accepted that those frustrations be worked out in other ways than going off and screaming.

Shearer: Yes, or maybe accepted that those frustrations exist.

Cox: Exist, yes. Then, of course, the husband has to be brought into it, so that he realizes those frustrations exist and they're not just women's hysteria.

Shearer: Is there anything that you would like to talk more about that I maybe have passed over too lightly, or that needs summing up?

Cox: What I thought I would do after I see the material is go through all my notes, because I've been making notes along the way. For instance, in 1916 when I had the trip to Chicago I went to Hull House.

Shearer: Oh, really. I don't remember that being on tape, so that would be good to cover.

One thing: I envisioned this as our last formal taping session, but when you're going over the transcript there will be questions from me and holes that you see that need to be filled in, and I think you should feel free to write and elaborate.

Cox: Well, what I had thought I would do, and it may take me a little while to do it, but I thought when I see the material I would go through that and my notes and see what I may not have covered, and we will decide how important that is to put in. What I have also said to the family is that when it is all over with and I begin to think of anecdotes and things which perhaps don't dignify this memoir, I will write up some supplemental anecdotes and things just for their interest.

Shearer: They would love that.

Cox: I said something the other day, and Paul said, "I never heard of that before." It was a family anecdote. Paul said, "I never heard that before." So there are things of interest from a family standpoint, not from a sociological standpoint, and I have rather promised myself, when I break my leg [laughter], and am laid up for a while--

Shearer: [laughter] Oh, we have our ways, Mrs. Cox.

Cox: [laughter] Well, Paul said the other night, "I wish we had a tape recorder going."

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